

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

PAULA DEEN

& Friends

Living It Up, Southern Style



PAULA DEEN

author of *THE LADY & SONS JUST DESSERTS* and *THE LADY & SONS SAVANNAH COUNTRY COOKBOOK*

WITH MARTHA NESBIT



SIMON & SCHUSTER
Rockefeller Center
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

Copyright © 2005 by Paula Deen
Photographs copyright © 2005 by Alan Richardson

All rights reserved,
including the right of reproduction
in whole or in part in any form.

SIMON & SCHUSTER and colophon are registered trademarks of Simon & Schuster, Inc.
For information about special discounts for bulk purchases,
please contact Simon & Schuster Special Sales:
1-800-456-6798 or business@simonandschuster.com

Designed by Helene Berinsky

Manufactured in the United States of America

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Deen, Paula H.
Paula Deen & friends : living it up, southern style / Paula Deen.
p. cm.
Includes index.
1. Cookery, American—Southern style. I. Title: Paula Deen and friends. II. Title.

TX715.2.S69D43 2005
641.5975—dc22
2004065348

ISBN 0-7432-6722-2

*This book is dedicated to my soul mate,
my best friend, my precious husband,
Michael Groover,
the best taste-tester a girl could have.*



Acknowledgments

I am greatly indebted to the following “friends” for their party ideas and recipes (listed in order of appearance): Barbie Lientz, Trish McLeod, Alison and Danny Mahfet, James Roszkowiak, Herb Wardell, Alice Jo Giddens, Martha Nesbit, Patty Ronning, David and Katherine Slagel, Kelley Ort, Wez Childers, the late Sally Sullivan, Judy Poad, Donna Haney, Mary Lou Haney, Mona Nesbit, Catherine Taylor, Susan Greene, Dottie Courington, Jeanie Simmons, Katie Borges, Bob English, Carole Beason, Carolyn Donovan, Julia Holliday, Margie Levy, Suzanne Butler, Jane and Gilbert Wells, Sue Off, Phyllis Curlee, Maria Oxnard, Sarah Gaede, Linda Giddens, Robbie and Sandy Hollander, Jane Feiler, Inez Pachter, Gail Levites, Sandee Eichholz, Alice and Walter Dasher, Corrie Hiers, Glenna Harlan, Peggy Grimsley, Libby Lindsey, Karen Pannell, Sally Scott, Molly Gignilliat, and Laura (“Shaky”) Schexnayder-Thomas.

Thanks also to my agent, Barry Weiner, my biggest cheerleader, and my literary agent, Janis Donnaud; to the staff at Simon and Schuster: David Rosenthal, Aileen Boyle, Deb Darrock, Tracey Guest, Linda Dingler, Helene Berinsky, Jonathon Brodman, Sybil Pincus, Sarah Hochman, and especially the talented and *patient* Sydney Miner; to Gary, Zack, and Emory Nesbit, and Dottie Courington and Billy McGinley for being the taste-testers (talkin’ about the perfect job!); to Martha Nesbit for making sure the recipes work; to Christy Pingel for keeping me organized, dressed, and on schedule; to Brandon Branch for making my porch look like it was ready when it wasn’t; to the photographer, Alan Richardson, and stylist, Michael Pederson, for making the food in the book look so

gorgeous; to makeup artist Genevieve Markowsky for working her magic; to photographer Christine Hall for making me and my friends look gorgeous on the cover; to Susan Greene, Dora Charles, Aunt Peggy Ort, and Martha Nesbit for going through the torture of makeup and hairdoing, traveling, the horrible heat, and bugs to make this cover possible. We ain't bad for a bunch of old broads.

And last, but not least, to my sons, Jamie and Bobby; and my brother, Bubba Hiers; and the entire amazing staff at The Lady & Sons for representing me so well when this project took me away.

Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Paula's Birthday Bash</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>A Bridge Club Supper</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>New Year's Day Soup Lunch for the Neighbors</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>A Cooking Shower</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>A Georgia Bulldawg Parking Lot Tailgate</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Keen-ager Casserole Luncheon</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>The Boss Comes to Dinner</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>Comfort Food</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>A Teenager's Slumber Party</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>The Cookie Swap</i>	<i>85</i>
<i>Hunt Lunch in the Field</i>	<i>103</i>

<i>A Working Lunch</i>	111
<i>The Saturday Night Grill Party</i>	117
<i>A Weekend Campout</i>	127
<i>A BIG Cocktail Buffet for Out-of-Town Wedding Guests</i>	137
<i>A Christening Brunch</i>	151
<i>Run for the Roses</i>	159
<i>A Week at the Lake with the Kids</i>	169
<i>A Family Shabbat Dinner</i>	179
<i>An Ice Cream Social</i>	187
<i>Just Drinks</i>	193
<i>Metric Equivalencies</i>	199
<i>Index</i>	201

Foreword

About a year ago, I called my friend Martha Nesbit from the airport. Martha had been food editor of the *Savannah Morning News* when I was just starting out in the restaurant business, and she had featured my son Jamie's chicken salad recipe in one of her newspaper columns. Martha and I both like to cook, and we appreciate each other's food. We have very similar tastes. "I want you to collaborate with me on a cookbook!" I told Martha. And she said, "Yes!"

But what kind of book did we want to do? I had already done several recipe collections, and one dessert cookbook. What I really thought was missing was a book that told people how to put it all together. So we spent hours and hours thinking about how my friends like to entertain and came up with a long list of parties we thought would be fun to feature, from tailgates to bridge suppers, from christenings to camping trips. Then we set out to find the recipes that went with each party, going to some of the best southern cooks we know and begging for their best recipes. We threw in some of our own favorites, and as I do on my show, I tried to provide tips whenever possible to help you be successful with the recipes.

The result is a cookbook that I am so proud of. Not only do I think you are going to love the recipes, but I think you are going to love getting to know some of the people behind the recipes. Before I introduce you to them, here are some of my thoughts on entertaining, southern style:

The guest list is probably the most important part of planning a party. You should always invite fun-loving people. You can eat a hot dog with people who are fun and have

a great time. On the other hand, you can have filet mignon with a bunch of stick-in-the muds and be miserable. I always try to surround myself with people who love life.

Southerners really know how to entertain, and they will find any excuse to share food with loved ones. I tried to paint a picture with words of these settings so you could re-create these heartfelt parties for yourselves, wherever you live.

As for the food, I can guarantee that you're going to like these recipes. I meet people every day from all corners of the United States at my restaurant in Savannah, The Lady & Sons, and I've found that the love and appreciation for our Deep South cookin' knows no geographic boundaries. Our cookin' is *so, so* good, and I think our party food is definitely food for the gods.

To me, the hardest part of entertaining has never been the actual cookin' but the menu planning, which I think is a chore! So if you're anything like me, I think you'll love grabbing this book and just shakin' those pots and pans, because I've done the planning for ya. Here's that book I always wish I had, with the parties laid out for me! I wanted to write an entertaining book with unique ideas for people who entertain the way I do, which is very casually. I just love people, and that's what's important about entertaining in the South—enjoying good food with people you love. This book is all about real people cookin' real food. So let's get to cookin', y'all!

*Paula Deen
&
Friends*

LIVING IT UP, SOUTHERN STYLE

Introduction



Hey, y'all! If you know my story, or read the intro to *The Lady & Sons Just Desserts*, I can't believe the next book is due and it's time to continue the story. And I have to tell ya, I'm sittin' here laughing right now in front of the computer because in the last paragraph of the last book—you know, when I was talking about Michael—well, we had been in our relationship for only about two months. So I couldn't tell the complete story because I knew he would read it and I didn't want him to think that I'd put some kind of hex on him. But if you'll remember, I told y'all how my dogs, Otis and Sam, ran on me one day and led me straight to Michael's house. Well, now that I'm pouring my heart out, I want to tell y'all the *whole* story.

Even though my business was on its way to being very successful, my social life was the pits. I was consumed with work and family—95 percent work and 5 percent family. I tried to figure out how I could improve my personal life, but everywhere I turned, I saw no opportunity. My days and nights were filled with work (I don't do bars), and Sunday was the one day when I could not leave the restaurant. So even *church* was out of the question! Well, I thought, and I thought, and I thought—and I finally realized that this one was going to have to be turned over to God. So, I added one more sentence at the end of my nightly prayers: "God, please send me a neighbor." This prayer started when I was living in downtown Savannah. One day I got a wild hair: I wanted to live on the water. So I loaded up the dogs, cats, and birds and moved to the water on

Wilmington Island. My prayer continued on, even though all my neighbors were married. Then, finally, came that fateful day Otis and Sam ran away. I'm here to tell y'all, you never know what the dogs will drag up!

Meeting Michael has to be one of the best things that's ever happened to me. But in addition to Michael, many other wonderful experiences have come my way since my last writing. My mind goes back to this one: Two years ago I was in the kitchen frying up chicken. I heard Rance, the kitchen manager, answer a phone call, and he handed the phone to me, saying, "Paula, Oprah is on the phone for ya!" I looked at him and said, "Get the hell out!" Well, lo and behold, the voice on the other end said, "Hi, Paula, this is Ray from *The Oprah Winfrey Show*." When I regained consciousness, Ray went on to tell me they were doing a show about women who began businesses from the home, and they were interested in possibly having me on as a guest. After a couple of phone interviews, I got the callback saying that, yes, they wanted me to be on the show. Before my head could even quit spinning, I found myself in Chicago sitting onstage right next to Oprah and telling my story. I kissed her hand and said, "Oh, girl, I feel like I'm meetin' the Queen!" With a hearty laugh, Oprah said, "No, I was with the real one last week in England!" Needless to say, Oprah and I seemed to connect in that ten minutes we had together. I really think that Oprah is the woman that we all believe her to be, and I'll never forget this experience as long as I live. Oh, and did I forget to tell y'all? It was on this show that I announced to the world that I had just gotten my own show on the Food Network and *Paula's Home Cooking* would begin airing in November of that year.

I have to let ya'll in on a little secret: I was scared to death! Could I stand up there and cook and talk to that TV camera like it was a friend of mine? The same girl who took twenty years to work her way out of agoraphobia? The doubts ran like a whirlwind through my head: "What if I fail?" "What if I stink?" "How badly would I let down my producer, Gordon Elliott—who had really stuck his neck out for me—or embarrass my family?" Well, I did my best to put all that "stinkin' thinkin'" aside and just concentrate on the wonderful opportunity that had been given to me. So, as green as a Granny Smith apple, I showed up to work. Before the day was up, my admiration for Gordon had grown so big that short of doing the show naked, I'd have done anything to make this show work. Well, thank goodness, y'all, we didn't have to pull out the naked trick.

In my first season I rode motorcycles, a Vespa scooter, and flew in a hot-air balloon. The

hot-air balloon was the worst, though. From the beginning I had my doubts about this one. Especially when I walked out on the field and saw this big balloon with a huge fire underneath it. Well, everybody said, “You’ll have a ball, Paula—it’ll be so much fun!” Wrong! So I’m gonna try to describe to y’all what you didn’t see. Picture an old white-headed girl gracefully trying to crawl into the basket, trying desperately to keep her catfish belly from peeking from under her shirt. Not pretty! Once in, clutching my basket of food, I quickly tried to deliver my lines. Well, *my* lines were not the ones to worry about. I should have been worrying about the lines on the hot-air balloon, because as luck would have it, the line to the balloon snapped and the basket was swaying wildly and I was screaming my lungs out as the balloon started its very shaky liftoff. I could see Gordon running across the field trying to catch the line and pull us back down. Thank God, Gordon is six feet seven; otherwise, I was gonna be a star, all right! There was nothing to stop me from going as high as that balloon was capable of going. Well, all’s well that ends well. Gordon caught the rope and pulled me to safety, and it took me one full hour to stop hyperventilating!

One episode that I will never forget from my second season is my time with former President Jimmy Carter. I felt just like a schoolgirl. I was totally in awe of this man, Miss Rosalynn, his friends, and his town of Plains, located right down the road from my birthplace, Albany, Georgia. Walking the streets of his hometown, with my arm linked in his, I could feel the love that he had for his people and the place where he had chosen to live his entire life. Mr. Jimmy, as I affectionately call him, is the epitome of a true Southern Gentleman.

But the most memorable event in my life as a Food Network host, or in my life, period, for that matter, came when I married Michael on a televised special called *Paula Deen’s Wedding*. I felt like Cinderella, and instead of having a fairy godmother, I had a fairy godproducer and a crew that produced magic. More than one time I asked myself, “Is it silly for a woman of my age to act like a young bride?” Even after going through the torture of the dress fitting (and I’m not a size 10), the answer to that is, “No, girls, it is not!” I think being the age I am made it even more special, and understanding that meeting your soul mate is a gift, not a “given.”

We’ve had so many fun times and laughs while working on this show. Don’t get me wrong, it’s hard work and can be long hours, but I’m a firm believer in “work is what you make it,” and thank goodness, so is the rest of the team.

So the road on this show has taken me on lots of twists and turns, but the latest turn was just too unbelievable. Would you believe that Gail Levin, head of casting with Paramount Studios, gave me a call out of the blue one day? There was a part in a movie she was trying to cast, but it kept stumping her. She told me she kept asking herself, "Who is this character in real life?" As fate would have it, Gail's TV was tuned in to the Food Network, and *Paula's Home Cooking* was on the air. She looked at my face on her TV screen and thought, "That's the girl for the part!" So Paula goes to Hollywood! Y'all, please don't miss this movie. And whatever y'all do, don't get up to get popcorn after the movie starts, 'cause you might miss me. Oh, by the way, the name of the movie is *Elizabethtown*. As of this writing, the movie is still in production, so I can't tell y'all when it'll be out; you'll just have to watch for it.

I'm also happy to report that my sons, Jamie and Bobby, continue to thrive in their blessings. I'm so proud of those two young men. They still continue to be my best work.

And speaking of children, I have to tell y'all, I think getting kids after they're grown may be the smart way to go. Marrying Michael gave me two new children: Michelle, twenty-two, and Anthony, nineteen. I didn't have the first labor pain or the first sleepless night getting 'em raised. Their father did a fabulous job, and they are an added blessing to my abundant life.

And my brother, Bubba? They definitely threw the mold away with that one. As we speak, Bubba and I are working to get another restaurant opened. So if you're planning a trip to Savannah, please drop in to Uncle Bubba's Oyster House, located on Wilmington Island, because if I'm not at The Lady & Sons, there's a good chance that's where you'll find me.

Oh, and by the way, Aunt Peggy is still reigning over all she surveys.

Without a doubt, my life has been an amazing journey. It's my wish for those who have felt loneliness and despair, experienced failure and defeat, and been crippled by fear, that my story will bring encouragement and hope, 'cause I'm here to tell y'all, if you wake up on the right side of the dirt, it's a good day; we got one more chance!

And always remember, I send y'all best dishes and love from Savannah, Georgia.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paula Deen". To the right of the signature is a small, hand-drawn circular doodle containing a heart shape.

Paula's Birthday Bash

THE MENU

BEER-IN-THE-REAR CHICKEN

BACON-WRAPPED GRILLED CORN ON THE COB

GREEN BEANS WITH NEW POTATOES

LACE HOECAKE CORN BREAD

ROASTED CARROTS

BUTTERMILK BISCUITS

BUTTERMILK POUND CAKE WITH STRAWBERRIES AND WHIPPED CREAM

Since my recent marriage, my family has doubled in size, which means so have the birthdays. And that's all right by me, because I just love throwing birthday parties for my family and close family friends. Because some months have multiple birthdays, I've found that it was easier if I picked one Sunday in each month and celebrated all the birthdays for that month on the same day. Take March, for example. This past March we had five birthdays, which meant five cakes, because one of the rules is "Everybody has his own cake." For this I have to confess I just go to the local grocery store, head straight for the bakery department, and order each guest of honor a personalized birthday cake. Then I bake a homemade pound cake and serve it along with fresh sweetened strawberries, ice cream, and fresh whipped cream. That gives everybody a traditional cake as well as that scrumptious, scrumptious homemade cake. Well, I'm really getting ahead of myself with this story, though, because before anyone can sing, blow out their candles, and eat birthday cake, there are a lot of things that have to happen first!

A few years back, I realized that our childhoods were getting further and further behind us, and that made me sad. So I set out to find a way to step back in time and recapture a small piece of that time when our lives were worry free. I decided one way to do this was through the wonderful, silly games we all played at our childhood birthday parties. Well, needless to say, when I announced that this birthday celebration was going to involve games, the moans and groans commenced. All the

adult children said, "But we don't want to play games," and my response was, "If you're physically able, you must play the games, or no cake for you." Well, it took all of about three minutes for the hoots and hollers of laughter to begin. To this day, I cannot tell you who had the most fun—Jamie and Bobby playing pin the tail on the donkey, or Michelle and Anthony running the three-legged race. I also found that the guys love bashing a piñata.

So I'm happy to say, now on Birthday Sundays, when I clap my hands and yell, "Okay, let the games begin," everybody is eager to play. I also found that these games really work up a hearty appetite. So after the games and before the birthday cake we all share a scrumptious meal together. Michael and I always make sure to plan a meal that is easy to prepare for a large crowd. Michael does the outside cooking while I prepare the inside dishes. It's really a toss-up between the most requested meal, but it's almost always a low-country boil or a Beer-in-the-Rear Chicken.

Michael and I would like to share with y'all one of our Birthday Bash menus and hope that your family and friends enjoy it as much as ours do.

BEER-IN-THE-REAR CHICKEN

1 chicken (3 pounds)
Lawry's seasoned salt
House Seasoning (see box,
below)
One 12-ounce can beer
1 sprig rosemary
Assorted barbecue and hot
sauces, your choice

1. Wash and drain the chicken and pat dry. Coat the chicken inside and out with seasoned salt and House Seasoning. Refrigerate until ready to cook.

2. Prepare the charcoal grill. When the coals are hot and glowing, carefully push them over to the sides of the grill, leaving an open space in the middle of the grill. Open the can of beer and pour off approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. Insert the sprig of rosemary into the can, then place the beer can, keeping it upright, into the rear cavity of the chicken. Carefully place the chicken, standing up on the beer can, in the center of the grill, facing one of the banks of coals, making sure not to spill the beer. Cover the grill and cook the chicken for approximately 1 hour, or until done, rotating the chicken as necessary. The chicken is done when the juice runs clear when pierced with a fork.

3. Carefully remove the beer can from the chicken using mitts and discard the can. Cut the chicken into halves or quarters. I personally don't want any sauce on this chicken, but I always offer barbecue sauces and hot sauces to my guests.

*One chicken serves 2 to 4, depending on appetites.
My crowd can all eat half a chicken each, easy.*

HOUSE SEASONING

Keep this in a shaker by the stove. This seasoning goes with just about anything.

1 cup salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup garlic powder
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup pepper

BACON-WRAPPED GRILLED CORN ON THE COB

8 ears fresh corn, husks
attached
8 slices bacon
Butter

1. Gently pull back the husks, completely exposing the kernels, but do not remove the husks. Remove the corn silk and use a brush to make sure all the silk is removed. In a large pot filled with water, soak the corn for 30 minutes.

2. Preheat the grill to medium.

3. Remove the corn from the water and pat dry. Take a slice of bacon and wrap it spiral-fashion around an ear of corn. Fold the husk back over the corn and bacon. Tie the husk with butcher string. Repeat the process for each ear of corn. Place the corn on the hot grill and cook, turning occasionally, until the bacon is cooked and the corn is tender, approximately 15 to 20 minutes. The bacon will not be brown, which doesn't bother me one bit, but if it bothers you, gently pull the husks back and run the corn under the broiler for a few minutes until the bacon is brown. Serve with butter!

Serves 8

GREEN BEANS WITH NEW POTATOES

My children's favorite green beans were cooked by their Great-Grandmother Paul. She used very little water and always wilted them. It dawned on me a couple of months back that while I had been cookin' these like Grandmama Paul did for years, I didn't have an exact formula. So the other day, I went into the kitchen at the restaurant and wrote down exactly everything I did. Well, I brought home that pot of beans and potatoes for Michael's supper. I served them alongside of Lace Hoecake Corn Bread and sliced tomatoes with onions. We fixed our plates and started eating, when all of a sudden Michael put down his fork, looked at me, and said, "Paula, those are the best green beans I have ever eaten." Needless to say, that little statement made me very happy, and once again proved that Grandmama Paul was a fabulous teacher.

3 pounds fresh green beans
¼ pound salt pork, sliced
¼ cup bacon grease (pour
this into a jar and keep
on hand in the
refrigerator to use as
needed)
2 cups chicken broth plus
more if needed (canned
is fine)
2 to 3 teaspoons House
Seasoning (see box,
page 7)
12 small red potatoes, or
more
1 onion, cut into slivers

1. Remove the ends from the beans. Snap the beans in two, place into a colander, wash, and set aside to drain.

2. Meanwhile, in a large cast-iron Dutch oven, lightly brown the salt pork in the bacon grease over medium heat, turning often, for approximately 10 minutes.

3. Toss the green beans into the pot, stirring them with a wooden spoon to coat well with the pork fat. Add the stock and House Seasoning. Cook over medium-low heat, covered tightly, for approximately 30 minutes, or until the beans are half done.

4. While the beans are cooking, peel a center strip from each new potato with a potato peeler. At the end of 30 minutes, add the potatoes and onion to the beans; add ¼ cup more broth if needed. Cook, covered tightly, until the potatoes are tender, approximately 25 to 30 minutes, periodically checking the pot to make sure a small amount of liquid remains. When the potatoes are tender, tilt the lid slightly, off to the side of the pot, and continue to cook until the green beans are wilted, approximately 15 minutes.

Serves 8 to 10

My tips for cooking phenomenal green beans: Stir often. Add additional chicken broth in small amounts as needed, but don't drown your beans

LACE HOECAKE CORN BREAD

2 cups plain enriched white
cornmeal, sifted
1 teaspoon salt
Vegetable oil

1. Combine the cornmeal, salt, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups water and allow the mixture to sit for a few minutes.

2. Spray a flat hoe skillet with vegetable oil cooking spray and drizzle with approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons of oil. Heat the skillet over medium heat. Pour about three 2-ounce ladlefuls of the batter onto the skillet. The batter will sizzle and have a lacy appearance. If the batter gets too thick, add a bit of water. When the edges are slightly brown, place a wet glass plate over the hoe-cake. With a pot holder, grab the handle of the pan and flip the plate and pan so the hoe-cake falls onto the plate. Slide the hoe-cake off the plate back into the pan to cook the other side, and cook until golden brown.

3. Stir the batter and add additional oil to the pan before making your next hoe-cake.

Makes 8 to 10 large hoe-cakes, or 24 to 36 small hoe-cakes

NOTE: If you do not have a hoe skillet, make small (2- to 3-inch) hoe-cakes in a flat, cast-iron skillet.

ROASTED CARROTS

This is my son Jamie's favorite way to eat carrots. I buy the baby carrots already peeled and cleaned; they are uniform in size and cook evenly; but you can peel and quarter large carrots if you prefer. This dish is so simple, yet so delicious.

One 1-pound bag baby
carrots
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon House
Seasoning (see box,
page 7)
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons chopped fresh
parsley

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. In a large bowl, coat the carrots with the olive oil.
Toss with the House Seasoning and place in a 13-by-9-
inch roasting pan. Roast until tender, approximately 30
minutes. Remove from the oven and toss the carrots
with the butter and chopped parsley.

Serves 6 to 8



BUTTERMILK BISCUITS

Do yourself a huge favor and pick up frozen Pillsbury Oven Baked Buttermilk Biscuits. Hide the bag and take the bows!



BUTTERMILK POUND CAKE

Buttermilk gives this cake its delicious tang.

3 cups all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup (2 sticks) butter,
softened
½ cup vegetable shortening
3 cups sugar
5 eggs
1 cup buttermilk
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F. Grease and flour a 10-inch Bundt pan.

2. Sift together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt and set aside.

3. Using an electric mixer, cream the butter, shortening, and sugar until fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time and mix well after each addition. Add the dry ingredients and the buttermilk alternately to the butter mixture, beginning and ending with the flour. Add the vanilla and mix well.

4. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake for 1¾ hours, or until the cake is done. (The cake will pull away from the sides of the pan when ready, and a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake will come out clean.) Remove the cake from the oven and let cool in the pan for 10 minutes. Invert onto a cake plate and serve each big slice of cake topped with strawberries and whipped cream.

Serves 8

FRESH STRAWBERRIES

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
2 pints strawberries, hulled
and sliced

Dissolve the sugar in $\frac{1}{3}$ cup warm water, add to the strawberries, and toss. Let stand, tossing a few times before serving. They will make their own juice in about 30 minutes.

Makes $3\frac{1}{2}$ cups

FRESH WHIPPED CREAM

1 cup whipping cream
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar

Using an electric mixer, beat together the cream and sugar until stiff.

Makes approximately 2 cups, enough for a dollop on 8 slices of strawberry-topped cake

A Bridge Club Supper

THE MENU

GRILLED PORK TENDERLOIN

ARTICHOKE RICE SALAD WITH SHRIMP

MARINATED TOMATOES

GARLIC CHEESE BISCUITS

ANGEL CHOCOLATE MOUSSE PIE

Before I can tell you about Barbie's Bridge Club Supper, I have to tell you about Barbie. Barbie lives in Savannah with her attorney husband, John Lientz. She's just about the most caring, unselfish person you ever could meet—to know her is to love her. For example, when she heard that John's cousin needed a kidney transplant, she offered right then and there to donate her own kidney. But when Barbie started the donation process, she found out that she had a possibly fatal kidney disease that needed treatment. The bottom line is this: Barbie's unselfishness wound up saving her own life. By the way, Barbie is fine, and John's cousin got his kidney.

Barbie, who has a long history of serving her community in organizations like the Junior League, Second Harvest Food Bank, and her church's mission outreach committee, also likes to have fun! She tells me: "When my daughter was in preschool, Janet Barrow and I decided to organize a little bridge group. We played during the morning from nine to twelve, making a mad dash to pick up the children by noon. Most of the original members of the Isle of Hope Bridge Club have come and gone, but the group still continues. We celebrated our twenty-fifth anniversary in 2004!"

Barbie served this menu buffet style in her dining room, using real china and silver. She says there never seem to be enough occasions to use china and silver, and so she decided, What the heck! We'll use the good stuff, even if my guests are in shorts and sandals!

GRILLED PORK TENDERLOIN

This pork tenderloin tastes better the longer it marinates. You can grill it the day before and serve it at room temperature.

1 pork tenderloin (2 to 2½ pounds)

MARINADE:

¼ cup soy sauce

2 tablespoons dry red wine

1 tablespoon honey

1 tablespoon brown sugar,
dark or light brown

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 teaspoon minced fresh
ginger

½ teaspoon ground
cinnamon

2 green onions, chopped,
white and green parts

1. Place the pork tenderloin in a resealable plastic bag. Place all of the marinade ingredients in a measuring cup and whisk to combine. Pour the marinade over the tenderloin and seal the bag. Marinate overnight in the refrigerator.

2. Preheat an outdoor grill, or preheat the oven to 350°F. Remove the tenderloin from the marinade and pat dry. Reserve the marinade. Grill the meat for about 35 to 40 minutes over medium heat, or roast in the oven for 45 minutes. Allow the meat to sit for about 10 minutes before cutting into 2-inch pieces for serving.

3. While the meat is grilling, gently simmer the reserved marinade in a small saucepan until it is reduced to about 2 tablespoons, stirring occasionally. Drizzle a small amount of marinade over each serving of meat.

Serves 6 to 8

ARTICHOKE RICE SALAD WITH SHRIMP

You can serve this cold as a salad or hot as a casserole; it's delicious either way. The colors are so beautiful—yellow curried rice, green pepper, onions, olives with pimiento, and pretty pink shrimp.

One 6.9-ounce package
Rice-A-Roni, chicken
flavor
One 6-ounce jar marinated
artichoke hearts
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mayonnaise
 $\frac{1}{2}$ green bell pepper,
chopped
3 to 4 green onions,
chopped, white and green
parts
12 to 14 pimiento-stuffed
green olives, sliced
1 teaspoon curry powder
Salt and pepper
1 pound small or medium
shrimp, peeled and
deveined (see Note for
cooking directions)

1. In a skillet sprayed with vegetable oil cooking spray, brown the Rice-A-Roni. (Do not add the butter or oil that the package directions suggest.) Add the water the package requires and the seasoning packet and prepare according to package directions.

2. Drain the artichoke hearts and reserve the marinade. In a small bowl, whisk the marinade and the mayonnaise to combine. Add the green pepper, green onions, olives, curry powder, salt and pepper to taste, and mix together. Add this mixture to the rice.

3. Gently stir in the cooked shrimp. If serving as a salad, chill. If serving as a casserole, place in a $2\frac{1}{2}$ -quart casserole dish and bake in a 350°F oven for 20 minutes, until heated through.

Serves 6 to 8

NOTE: If you are going to serve this recipe as a cold salad, cook the shrimp in a small amount of salted water for about 3 to 4 minutes, until firm and cooked through. Test a shrimp to see if it is the texture you like. If you are going to serve this as a hot casserole, just plunge the shrimp into boiling water for 2 to 3 minutes and drain, as they will continue cooking during the baking of the casserole. You do not want them to be overcooked. Larger shrimp will need to cook a little longer than small shrimp. Taste as you go!

MARINATED TOMATOES

The best thing about this recipe is that it makes even those awful winter tomatoes taste delicious. It's got the perfect tang to go with the sweet pork and the savory curried rice, not to mention that it's a great color addition to the plate. The leftover marinade can be used to dress a simple lettuce salad.

DRESSING:

- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1½ teaspoons garlic salt
- 1½ teaspoons seasoned salt, such as Lawry's or Sauer's
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ¾ teaspoon dried oregano
- ¾ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup red wine vinegar

- 4 to 6 large tomatoes, cored, each cut into six wedges

Place all of the ingredients for the dressing in a measuring cup and whisk thoroughly to combine. Place the tomatoes in a resealable plastic bag and pour in the dressing. Marinate for 4 to 5 hours or overnight in the refrigerator. Bring to room temperature before serving. Serve with a slotted spoon.

Serves 6 to 8

GARLIC CHEESE BISCUITS

These are almost better the day after than when you first make them. It's the garlic butter that makes them so tasty. Leftovers (if there are any!) can be refrigerated. When ready to serve, split and reheat biscuits in a toaster oven for about 3 minutes at 300°F.

1¼ cups Bisquick baking
mix
½ cup grated sharp Cheddar
cheese
¼ cup (½ stick) butter,
melted
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon dried parsley
flakes

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. Combine the Bisquick and cheese in a small bowl. Add ⅓ cup water and stir just until combined. The dough will be slightly moist. Drop the dough by tablespoonfuls onto the prepared baking sheet. Bake for about 10 minutes, until firm and beginning to brown.

3. While the biscuits are baking, make the garlic butter. In a small bowl, combine the butter, garlic powder, salt, and parsley flakes. Mix well.

4. As soon as you bring the biscuits from the oven, brush them with garlic butter, using a pastry brush.

Makes 12 small biscuits

ANGEL CHOCOLATE MOUSSE PIE

This is so rich, you can only manage a sliver! Make sure your bowl and beaters are absolutely clean and grease free, or your egg whites won't beat up nice and fluffy. The meringue does get soggy if it isn't eaten the first day after preparation, but the pie is still delicious.

½ cup chopped pecans
3 egg whites, at room temperature
1 teaspoon cream of tartar
½ cup sugar

FILLING:

One 12-ounce package
semisweet chocolate chips
¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups whipping cream,
whipped
Additional whipped cream
for topping (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 300°F. Grease, or spray with vegetable oil cooking spray, a 9-inch glass pie plate.

2. Place the pecans on an ungreased baking sheet and toast in the oven for 3 to 5 minutes. Check them after 3 minutes; you don't want them to burn! Remove the pecans to cool and reduce the oven temperature to 275°F. Grind 1 tablespoon of the nuts in a food processor and set aside.

3. Place the egg whites in a mixing bowl. Begin beating the egg whites with an electric mixer at low speed. When frothy, add the cream of tartar and gradually add the sugar, beating all the while, until the egg whites are stiff. When you lift the beaters, no egg white should fall from them. Gently stir in the chopped pecans.

4. Spread the meringue in the bottom of the prepared pie plate and bake for 1 hour. When you remove the meringue from the oven, it will be puffed up, but it will deflate as it cools, leaving a crater in the center for the pie filling.

5. To make the filling: Place the chocolate chips and 6 tablespoons water in a bowl and microwave for 2 minutes, until the chocolate is almost melted. Stir well, making sure that all the chips are completely melted (they will continue to melt as you stir). Let cool, then add the vanilla and fold in the whipped cream. Put the filling into the cooled meringue shell. Sprinkle the reserved ground nuts over the top of the pie filling.

6. Refrigerate the pie for a few hours before serving. Serve with an additional dollop of whipped cream, if desired.

Serves 6 to 8

New Year's Day Soup Lunch for the Neighbors

THE MENU

POTATO SOUP WITH SHRIMP

SPICY TOMATO SOUP

MINNESOTA WILD RICE SOUP

CREAM OF BROCCOLI AND CAULIFLOWER SOUP

GREEN CHILI CORN MUFFINS

PLATTER OF LEFTOVER HOLIDAY GOODIES

You know, there's no nicer way to start off the New Year than by enjoying a cup of homemade soup while catching up with the neighborhood news in a friend's kitchen. Well, that's just what this party is all about. It's a great way for neighbors to reconnect before the onslaught of a new year. The meal is inexpensive, simple, tasty, and appreciated by all those who made the resolution to start counting calories after the holidays. If any of your neighbors happen to be vegetarians, this menu will make them happy, too. Last but not least, this party provides a way to get rid of all those leftover Christmas sweets.

Here are some tips to make this informal get-together easy for you and special for your guests:

Make your soups several days beforehand, undercooking everything slightly so that they're still at the peak of perfection when reheated. Begin reheating the soups over very low heat about 45 minutes before the party.

Compose and print out invitations on the computer and distribute them several days before the party. Or, if you have all of the addresses, why not just use e-mail? No RSVP required, as leftovers can be frozen or taken to friends who are recovering from the holiday blahs.

This is a one-hour party. I always plan mine for 12:00 noon to 1:00, as the football kickoffs are usually at 1:30 on New Year's Day. You could go earlier, 11:30 to 12:30, if you don't have party animals for neighbors. My crowd are generally on the mature side, and noon to one has always suited them.

Leave up your holiday decorations. Throw all the clutter into a plastic trash bag and toss it into a closet until after the party. If you have something blooming in the yard, clip a few blooms and place them in glass vases to add a little freshness to your decorations, or make a quick trip to the grocery florist. Turn on all the Christmas lights, and light every candle you have in the house, even though the party is midday.

Serve the soups straight from the pots on the stove. Have heatproof throwaway cups and extra spoons handy. Plastic is okay for this party; in fact, plastic is advisable if your guests want to taste several soups. (Sometimes, they taste them all!) Pick up some cute napkins that say something fun about the New Year. You don't need paper plates unless you feel a real need.

Have condiments (grated cheese, crumbled bacon, homemade croutons) grouped in interesting bowls in the center of an island or on the kitchen table. Have the tiny corn muffins in a cute basket next to the condiments.

Assemble assorted chocolates, pralines, peppermints, cookies, slices of fruitcake, and any other goodies you've been given for Christmas in pretty dishes for dessert. You won't get rid of all of it, but with twenty people picking at it, you are bound to have fewer sweets around to tempt you than you did before the party. Coffee, hot or iced tea, lemonade, hot chocolate, and ice water are perfect beverages for this get-together.

The recipes that follow, in the quantities suggested, serve twenty moderate eaters. The entire party, including tea and lemonade, costs around \$100.

POTATO SOUP WITH SHRIMP

Potato soup is an unsung hero of the soup world; there is just nothing more belly-pleasing. As the potatoes cook, the soup thickens, leaving behind some chunks of potato. Cook the shrimp separately and add them at the last minute. They add great flavor and color, but if you don't have any shrimp on hand, the soup is still terrific without them.

¼ cup (½ stick) butter
1 small onion, diced
2 medium carrots, diced
about the same size as the
onion
2 tablespoons all-purpose
flour
8 medium russet potatoes,
peeled and cubed
4 cups milk, whole, reduced
fat (2%), or low fat (1%)
2 chicken bouillon cubes,
dissolved in ½ cup hot
milk
1 cup half-and-half
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
1 pound medium shrimp
Crumbled bacon bits, for
garnish
Grated sharp Cheddar
cheese, for garnish

1. In a 4-quart saucepan, melt the butter and sauté the onion and carrots until both are slightly tender, about 5 minutes. Whisk in the flour and cook for 1 minute. Add the potatoes, milk, and dissolved bouillon cubes. Cook over medium heat for 15 minutes, until the potatoes are very soft and some of them have begun to dissolve into mush. Add the half-and-half, salt, and pepper. Let cool, then refrigerate until party time.

2. In a small saucepan, bring 2 cups lightly salted water to a boil. Add the shrimp all at once and stir well. Watch the shrimp closely; as soon as they all turn pink, turn off the heat and drain. The shrimp should be slightly undercooked. When they are cool, peel them, chop roughly into big chunks, and place them in a plastic bag. Refrigerate until party time.

3. Reheat the soup over very low heat (it will stick to the bottom of the pot if you heat it too quickly) about 45 minutes before the party. When the soup is hot, add the shrimp and stir well. Encourage your guests to sprinkle the soup with bacon bits and grated Cheddar cheese. They won't be sorry they did!

SPICY TOMATO SOUP

This will be the hit of the party. It's just sensational—so much better than what comes in the can!

½ cup (1 stick) plus
3 tablespoons butter
½ cup all-purpose flour
1 medium onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, diced
3 cups chicken broth
(canned is fine)
One 29-ounce can tomato
sauce
One 29-ounce can diced
tomatoes, with juice
2 dashes of your favorite hot
sauce, such as Tabasco
¼ cup honey
1 tablespoon dried dill weed
½ teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon dried basil
Homemade croutons (see
Note)

1. In a 4-quart heavy-bottomed saucepan, melt half (5½ tablespoons) of the butter. When melted, whisk in the flour and stir until very smooth. Cook over low heat for about 5 minutes, until very thick and smooth.

2. In a small skillet, melt the remaining butter. Sauté the onion and garlic over low heat until the onion is translucent, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the onion and garlic to the flour mixture and combine. Slowly add the chicken broth, about 1 cup at a time, stirring well after each addition and allowing the soup to thicken slightly before adding more broth. When all the broth is added, begin adding the tomato sauce and the diced tomatoes, about 1 cup at a time, stirring well, then allowing the mixture to thicken before adding more. When all the tomato sauce and diced tomatoes have been added, season the soup with the hot sauce, honey, dill weed, pepper, chili powder, and basil. Turn off the heat, let cool, and refrigerate until party time.

3. The day of the party, reheat the soup over very low heat for about 45 minutes so that the flavors can blend. Stir frequently, as the soup will stick to the bottom of the pot. Garnish with homemade croutons.

NOTE: To make croutons, brush day-old French bread slices with olive oil. Sprinkle with garlic salt or a spice blend of your choice. Toast in a 300°F oven until very dry. Cut into small cubes. Store in an airtight container or bag until party time.

MINNESOTA WILD RICE SOUP

This soup will change texture as it sits overnight, as the rice will continue to absorb the broth and thicken the soup. The flavors are delicious, and the almonds add an unexpected crunch.

¼ cup wild rice
2 tablespoons butter
2 medium stalks celery,
diced small
1 medium carrot, diced
small
1 medium onion, diced
small
3 tablespoons all-purpose
flour
Two 14-ounce cans chicken
broth
1 cup half-and-half
⅓ cup dry sherry
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
⅓ cup slivered almonds,
lightly toasted
¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

1. Cook the wild rice in lightly salted water, according to instructions on the package, until almost done, about 45 minutes.

2. In a 4-quart saucepan, heat the butter and sauté the celery, carrot, and onion until the vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes. Whisk in the flour and cook for 2 minutes more, stirring constantly. Slowly add the broth, about 1 cup at a time, stirring until the soup thickens after each addition. When all of the broth has been added, add the half-and-half and sherry. Season with the salt and pepper. Add the cooked rice. Turn off the heat, let cool, and refrigerate until party time.

3. The day of the party, reheat the soup over very low heat just until hot. Just before your guests arrive, stir in the almonds and parsley.

CREAM OF BROCCOLI AND CAULIFLOWER SOUP

Sometimes it's hard to find frozen cauliflower. If you can't, you can use fresh or even one of the frozen prepared dishes, like cauliflower with cheese sauce. Either one will work just fine.

Two 10-ounce packages
frozen chopped broccoli
One 10-ounce package
frozen cauliflower, or
½ head fresh cauliflower,
separated into flowerets,
or one 10-ounce package
frozen cauliflower in
cheese sauce
2 cups chicken broth
(canned is fine)
1 cup half-and-half
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
2 cups grated Swiss cheese

1. In a 4-quart stockpot, cook the broccoli and cauliflower in the broth until tender, about 15 minutes. Let cool. Puree in a blender or food processor, leaving the soup a little chunky. Return the soup to the stockpot. Add the half-and-half, salt, and pepper. Let cool and refrigerate until party time.

2. The next day, reheat the soup over very low heat for about 45 minutes. Just before your guests arrive, stir in the Swiss cheese.

GREEN CHILI CORN MUFFINS

These little muffins are so beautiful. Put them in a big basket and let guests help themselves.

1¼ cups stone-ground
cornmeal
½ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup shredded sharp
Cheddar cheese
One 8-ounce can cream-
style corn
1 cup sour cream
One 4-ounce can chopped
green chilies
½ cup canola oil
2 eggs, lightly beaten

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Spray miniature muffin tins with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. In a small mixing bowl, combine the cornmeal, salt, and baking powder, stirring with a metal spoon. Add the cheese, corn, sour cream, and chilies. Stir until lightly combined. Add the oil and eggs and stir until everything is just combined; do not overmix. The batter will be very stiff.

3. Place about ½ tablespoon of batter into each muffin cup. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes. Serve warm.

Makes 48 miniature muffins

A Cooking Shower

THE MENU

TOMATO TARTS

SHRIMP AND GRITS

PECAN-COATED FISH WITH REMOULADE SAUCE

ROSEMARY AND GARLIC ROASTED NEW POTATOES

FRESH ASPARAGUS WITH LEMON BUTTER

FRESH FRUIT TART

I was working myself silly at The Lady restaurant in the Best Western motel in Savannah in the mid-1990s when I received a call from Martha Nesbit, who was the food editor of the Savannah Morning News. She wanted the recipe for my son Jamie's chicken salad, one of our popular menu items, and I was thrilled to pieces to share it with her!

Martha and I have been food friends ever since. And let me tell you, that girl can cook! Bobby Flay's team came to Savannah to tape a segment for the Food Network's FoodNation with Bobby Flay, and Bobby spent a morning in Martha's kitchen because she had agreed to prepare shrimp and grits for a segment on the show. Several years later, Bobby and I were out in L.A. taping a \$25,000 Pyramid show together. Bobby made a point to tell me hands down that Martha's shrimp and grits were the best he'd ever tasted. He said (with a big laugh) that normally he shares the food with his staff, but this particular dish, he ate the whole thing—by himself!

When we started this book, I told Martha I had one request: Please, please, give me the recipe for the shrimp and grits so I can share it with my reader friends.

Martha and her husband, Gary, served this menu one night to a very special engaged couple, Alison Ronning, who had been Martha's babysitter for many years, and Danny Mahfet. Martha asked Alison and Danny to invite several couples who enjoyed cooking, and they spent a casual evening in Martha's kitchen while she showed them how to prepare these recipes. Kinda like your own personal cooking show! They ate the tomato tarts straight off the cookie sheet, and shrimp and grits ladled right

out of the pot onto Martha's grandmother's gold-rimmed bread plates. Then the group retired to the dining room for the rest of the meal and the presents, which were, of course, all culinary tools.

Alison reports that she and Danny still consider this their favorite meal, and it's one they prepared for all of their friends in Atlanta, where they lived and worked before returning to Savannah. Their "Georgia Bulldawg Parking Lot Tailgate" is featured on page 37. Alison's appreciation of good food and entertaining runs in the family: her mother, Patty, is one of Savannah's best cooks. Patty's recipes are featured on pages 66, 67, 70, 73, 77, 78, 79, 171, 173, 178, and 195. Those Ronning women are women with good taste!

TOMATO TARTS

These tarts smell so delicious when they are cooking, your guests will want to pluck them straight from the pan, but you need to let them cool or you'll burn your tongue! The recipe originally came from Savannah caterer Trish McLeod. You'll need a biscuit cutter for this recipe; take it with you when you shop for the tomatoes, so your tomatoes and pastry rounds are the same size.

1 sheet Pepperidge Farm
frozen puff pastry
Olive oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated white
Cheddar cheese
4 or 5 Italian plum
tomatoes, cut into
 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slices
Salt and pepper
2 tablespoons fresh thyme
leaves, chopped fine
Approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
freshly grated Parmesan
cheese

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Spray a baking sheet with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. Remove the puff pastry from the freezer and allow it to thaw for 20 minutes. Unfold the pastry on the counter, and using a $1\frac{1}{2}$ - or 2-inch biscuit cutter, cut out rounds of dough. Place the puff pastry rounds on the prepared baking sheet. Prick the surface of the pastry with a fork. Brush each round lightly with olive oil and top with a small amount of the Cheddar cheese, then with a tomato slice. Sprinkle salt and pepper to taste over the tomato, then sprinkle on a pinch of thyme and about 1 teaspoon of Parmesan cheese.

3. Bake for about 15 minutes. Let cool for 2 to 3 minutes before serving.

*Makes about 24 tarts,
depending on the size of the biscuit cutter*

SHRIMP AND GRITS

Here it is, y'all! Martha's beloved shrimp and grits recipe! If you have everything chopped and measured before you start cooking, it takes only about fifteen minutes to prepare. It's perfect as a one-dish meal for family.

- 1 cup stone-ground grits
- Salt and pepper
- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter
- 2 cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
- 1 pound shrimp, peeled and deveined, left whole if small and roughly chopped if medium or large
- 6 slices bacon, chopped into tiny pieces
- 4 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 1 cup thinly sliced green onions, white and green parts
- 1 large clove garlic, minced

1. In a medium saucepan, bring 4 cups water to a boil. Add the grits and salt and pepper to taste. Stir well with a whisk. Reduce the heat to the lowest possible setting and cook the grits until all the water is absorbed, about 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter and cheese. Keep covered until ready to serve.

2. Rinse the shrimp and pat dry. Fry the bacon in a large skillet until browned and crisp, then drain on a paper towel. Add the shrimp to the bacon grease in the skillet and sauté over medium heat just until they turn pink, about 3 minutes. Do not overcook! Immediately add the lemon juice, parsley, green onions, and garlic. Remove the skillet from the heat.

3. Pour the grits into a serving bowl. Pour the shrimp mixture over the grits. Garnish with the bacon bits.

4. If you are serving this as an appetizer, spoon ¼ cup grits onto a bread or salad plate. Top with ¼ cup of the shrimp mixture. Garnish with a sprinkling of crisp bacon bits and serve immediately.

Serves 8 as an appetizer or 4 as a main course

PECAN-COATED FISH WITH REMOULADE SAUCE

A chef taught Martha how to cook fish like the restaurants do. Although this recipe calls for grouper or snapper, you could use any 1-inch-thick fish fillet. There are two steps: searing the fish on the stovetop, then completing the cooking in a preheated oven.

You can usually fit only four 6-ounce fillets in a pan, so if you're cooking for more, you'll have to use a second skillet.

- 4 grouper or snapper fillets,
cut about 1 inch thick,
4 to 6 ounces each
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter,
melted
- 1 cup pecans, ground into
crumbs in a food
processor
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Rinse the fish and pat dry. Dredge the fish in the melted butter. Spread the ground pecans on a plate and press the fish into the crumbs to coat. Turn the fillets and coat the other side.
3. In a cast-iron or other heavy, ovenproof skillet, heat the tablespoon of butter with the oil. When it begins to sizzle, sear the fish about 3 minutes per side. Place the skillet in the oven for 6 to 10 minutes, depending on the thickness of the fillets and your preference for degree of doneness. Serve immediately with Remoulade Sauce on the side.

Serves 4

REMOULADE SAUCE

This is just a snazzed-up mayonnaise. It's delicious with any kind of seafood, but it's also yummy on the asparagus, or on your finger!

- 1/3 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1/3 cup chopped green onions, white and green parts
- 2 tablespoons capers, with juice
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard

Place the parsley, green onions, capers, and garlic in a blender or food processor and combine. Add the mayonnaise, olive oil, lemon juice, and mustard. Blend well. Chill until ready to serve with seafood. This keeps in a covered container in the refrigerator for several weeks.

Makes 1 1/2 cups

ROSEMARY AND GARLIC ROASTED NEW POTATOES

You'll want to start these potatoes about an hour before you want to serve dinner. (When finished, let them rest on the countertop while you cook the fish.) The smell of the garlic and rosemary is terrific. Leave the skins on the potatoes for color.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 2 tablespoons fresh rosemary, minced
- Salt and pepper
- 16 large new potatoes, scrubbed and cut into relatively uniform chunks

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a glass baking dish with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. Place the olive oil, garlic, and rosemary, and salt and pepper to taste, in a large resealable plastic bag. Add the potatoes, seal, and toss to coat evenly. Pour into the prepared baking dish. Roast the potatoes for about 30 to 40 minutes, until crisp on the outside and tender inside.

Serves 6 to 8

FRESH ASPARAGUS WITH LEMON BUTTER

Trim the asparagus early in the day and roll in a damp towel to keep fresh.

5 or 6 asparagus spears per
person, thin stalks
preferred
¼ cup (½ stick) butter
Juice of 1 lemon

1. Rinse the asparagus. Line the spears up on a cutting board with the tops even. Even up the bottoms, and cut off any tough ends.

2. Bring a skillet or oval casserole filled half full of salted water to a boil.

3. In a small saucepan, melt the butter and whisk in the lemon juice. Set aside.

4. When the water comes to a boil, dump in the asparagus all at once. When the water returns to a boil, cook the asparagus for 2 to 5 minutes, depending on their size and your preference. Drain the asparagus but do not rinse. Return them to the hot pan and pour the sauce over. Serve immediately.

FRESH FRUIT TART

This is just about the most beautiful dessert you'll ever make. Martha often takes it to new neighbors when they move in. If you're feeling really generous, you can include the recipe and offer the tart pan as a gift.

A food processor makes short work of the crust, but you can also make it in a bowl with a spoon.

CRUST:

½ cup confectioners' sugar
1½ cups all-purpose flour
¾ cup (1½ sticks) butter,
softened

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F

2. To make the crust: In a food processor, combine the confectioners' sugar, flour, and butter, and process until the mixture forms a ball. With your fingers, press the dough into a 12-inch tart pan with a removable bottom, taking care to push the crust into the indentations in the sides. Pat until the crust is even. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, until very lightly browned. Set aside to cool.

FILLING:

One 8-ounce package cream
cheese, softened
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

TOPPING:

Strawberries, kiwi slices,
blueberries, raspberries

GLAZE:

One 6-ounce can frozen
limeade concentrate,
thawed
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup granulated sugar

Whipped cream, for garnish

3. To make the filling: Beat the cream cheese, sugar, and vanilla together until smooth. Spread over the cooled crust.

4. Cut the strawberries into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slices and arrange around the edge of the crust. For the next circle, use kiwi slices. Add another circle of strawberries, and fill in any spaces with blueberries. Cluster the raspberries in the center of the tart.

5. To make the glaze: Combine the limeade, cornstarch, lime juice, and sugar in a small saucepan and cook over medium heat until clear and thick, about 2 minutes. Let cool. With a pastry brush, glaze the entire tart. You will not use all of the glaze.

6. Keep the tart in the refrigerator. Remove about 15 minutes before serving. Slice into 8 wedges and serve with a dollop of whipped cream.

Serves 8

A Georgia Bulldawg Parking Lot Tailgate

THE MENU

CHICKEN FINGERS (PURCHASED FROM A FAVORITE RESTAURANT,
LIKE ZAXBY'S OR GUTHRIE'S OR CHICK-FIL-A)

SMOKED TURKEY WRAPS

PIMIENTO CHEESE

DAWG BITE CHEESE SPREAD

GOOD SEASONS SALSA

SYMPHONY BROWNIES

COOLER OF ICE-COLD BEER

BLOODY MARYS

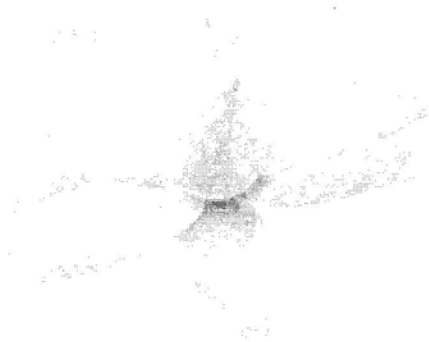
Alison and Danny Mahfet, of Savannah, are huge Dawg (as in Georgia Bulldawg) fans. Alison graduated from the University of Georgia in 1997, and her brother, Will Ronning, graduated in 1993. Years ago, Alison, Will, and some of their closest friends pooled their resources to buy a parking space (along with their season tickets) near the Georgia stadium, where, each home game, they set up an elaborate tailgate party. Now the group has grown to include new husbands, like Danny, who graduated from UGA in 1996, and assorted boyfriends, girlfriends, and soon, some new babies!

Here's the way Alison describes game day: "When we lived in Atlanta, all of our friends would meet at our house to load up all of our chairs and food coolers. (For really big games, we rent a huge van!) Once the cars are loaded and decorated with flags and magnets, we hit 316, the road to Athens. Wonderful Bloody Marys in red plastic cups are served to everyone except the driver. All the way down, the guys talk about how important this game is. The girls talk about what great red-and-black outfits we each have on. We always listen to a homemade Larry Munson [world-famous

voice of the Georgia Bulldogs] highlights CD. Route 316 is always packed with fellow Dawg fans—you are sure to see tons of friends along the way!

"Finally, we pull into one of the coveted Hull Street parking spots. We unload the supplies and the party really starts! The earlier you can get to Athens, the better. Now that we can no longer buy two-dollar student tickets, we are always sure to be in our seats in time for the kickoff. After the BIG WIN (always!), we return to tailgate some more until the traffic dies down and then we head back home to Atlanta."

It's not unusual to find this kind of devotion in Georgia folks. In fact, my sons, Jamie and Bobby, and my brother, Bubba, are three of the most avid Georgia Bulldawg fans you could ever meet. Even though none of them attended the university, that didn't keep them from going on the Internet to bid on lockers belonging to Tony Milton, Reggie Brown, and DJ Shockley. They each got a locker with a high bid of \$1,200 (apiece, y'all). Now, is that nuts or what? So, happy as three little boys with new toys, they were off to Athens to haul back their treasures. Jamie's and Bobby's lockers are proudly displayed here at the restaurant in their office. Bubba's locker is currently in storage, awaiting the opening of Uncle Bubba's Oyster House, where he will put it in its place of honor.



SMOKED TURKEY WRAPS

When Alison and Danny originally submitted this menu, we felt it needed one more thing: a good sandwich. So we turned to James Roszkowiak, who is famous for his green and red wraps served up on card tables set up in the parking lot prior to Savannah Christian Preparatory School Red Raider football games. These wraps are perfect for a tailgate, as they need to be made early in the day and wrapped in plastic to "mold" them into shape. Of course, you can do your own thing—we've made a roast beef wrap with horseradish/sour cream spread, and a vegetarian wrap made with artichoke hearts, roasted red peppers, and feta cheese. All of them are yummy, but these are the best.

6 sun-dried tomato-basil
or spinach-herb 10-inch
tortilla wraps

One 7-ounce container
roasted red pepper or
other flavor hummus

$\frac{3}{4}$ pound very thinly sliced
smoked, cracked-pepper,
Salsalito, or other spicy
turkey

Boston or Bibb lettuce
leaves, washed and dried

$\frac{1}{4}$ red onion, slivered

2 tomatoes, thinly sliced

12 slices bacon, cooked crisp
(optional)

Salt and pepper (optional)

1. Heat each wrap for about 10 seconds in a hot skillet or in the microwave.

2. Spread each wrap with hummus, spreading to within 1 inch of the edge all around. In the center of each wrap, place some smoked turkey, a lettuce leaf, 2 or 3 onion slivers, and 2 tomato slices. Top with 2 slices of bacon, if using, and sprinkle with salt and pepper, if desired. Fold in each side of the wrap, then roll tightly from the bottom. Wrap each tightly in plastic wrap.

2. To serve, cut each wrap into halves or thirds, depending on how many other items you have on the menu.

Makes 6 wraps

PIMIENTO CHEESE

There is always a huge fight if Alison forgets to make the pimiento cheese spread. It is an absolute necessity to ensure a Bulldawg win. Serve it on Wheat Thins, or as a sandwich filling. Some people (not Alison's group, however) also use it to stuff celery sticks.

One 8-ounce package
shredded sharp Cheddar
cheese
One 8-ounce package
shredded extra-sharp
Cheddar cheese
One 4-ounce jar pimientos,
with juice
¼ cup mayonnaise
Salt and pepper

Mix the shredded cheeses together with the pimientos, with juice. Stir in the mayonnaise. With a metal spoon (pimientos will stain plastic or wood), stir until the mixture is well blended. Add salt and pepper to taste and stir again. Keep covered in the refrigerator until ready to use. It is easier to spread if left out on the counter for about 30 minutes before serving.

Makes 3½ cups

DAWG BITE CHEESE SPREAD

This really has a kick. Serve at room temperature with crackers.

1 pound Velveeta cheese,
cut into 1-inch cubes
1 cup mayonnaise
One 5-ounce bottle
prepared horseradish

In a large glass mixing bowl, melt the Velveeta in the microwave on high power for about 90 seconds. Stir. If not soft and easy to stir, heat for 30 seconds more. Stir in the mayonnaise and half of the horseradish. Taste, and add more horseradish if you want more "bite." Stir again. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.

Makes 2 cups

GOOD SEASONS SALSA

I really didn't think this would work, but it does. When you stir in the cheese, it soaks up the dressing and creates a delicious "sauce."

4 small tomatoes, chopped
One 3.8-ounce can sliced
black olives, drained
One 4-ounce can green
chilies, chopped
4 green onions, white and
green parts, chopped
1 package Good Seasons
salad dressing mix,
prepared according to
package directions
One 8-ounce package
shredded Mexican cheese
(Monterey Jack, Cheddar,
and other mild cheeses
combined; available in
most supermarkets in the
dairy/cheese section)
Corn chip scoops (like
Fritos Scoops)

In a medium glass bowl, combine the tomatoes, olives, chilies, green onions, and dressing. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate. Just before serving, stir in the cheese. Serve with corn chip scoops.

SYMPHONY BROWNIES

Symphony bars take brownies to a whole new level.

One 17.6-ounce package
brownie mix with walnuts
Three 6-ounce Symphony
candy bars with almonds
and toffee chips

1. Prepare the brownie mix according to package directions.

2. Line a 13-by-9-inch cake pan with aluminum foil and spray with vegetable oil cooking spray. Spoon in half of the brownie batter and smooth with a spatula or the back of a spoon. Place the candy bars side by side on top of the batter. Cover with the remaining batter.

3. Bake according to package directions. Let cool completely, then lift from the pan using the edges of the foil. This makes it easy to cut the brownies into squares.

Makes 24 large or 48 small brownies

These brownies make a spectacular party dessert. Slightly warm a 2-by-2-inch square for 10 seconds in the microwave. Serve with a scoop of French vanilla ice cream, fresh raspberries, and a sprig of mint. Beautiful and delicious!

BLOODY MARYS

This recipe is adapted from a recipe made famous by Herb Wardell, of Savannah. Herb and his wife, Eloise, are family friends of the Ronnings; Alison and Will call Herb "Chicken."

One 46-ounce can V8
vegetable juice
1 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon Worcestershire
sauce

Juice of 1 lemon
1 cup vodka
1 tablespoon celery seed
4 shakes of Tabasco or other
hot sauce
Celery sticks, for garnish

Pour the juice into a large pitcher. Add the pepper, salt, Worcestershire sauce, lemon juice, vodka, celery seed, and hot sauce. Stir well. Pour into jars with lids for traveling. Serve over ice with celery sticks as stirrers.

Makes enough for about 10 drinks

Keen-ager Casserole Luncheon

THE MENU

HOT CHICKEN SALAD

SQUASH CASSEROLE

BROCCOLI CASSEROLE

CRANBERRY-PINEAPPLE GELATIN SALAD

SOURDOUGH GARLIC HERB BREAD

STRAWBERRY DELIGHT

CHOCOLATE DELIGHT

*M*artha Nesbit's mother, Alice Jo Giddens, and I have a lot in common: we were single mothers, and had to work hard to support our families. While I was busy in a restaurant kitchen, Mrs. Giddens was teaching at the Alice in Wonderland Kindergarten, a schoolroom attached to her house in Valdosta, Georgia. She taught every morning for thirty-five years, and tutored in the afternoons. Neither of us had much time for parties.

When Mrs. Giddens retired, she got involved with a church group of people aged fifty-five and older called the Keen-agers. For a number of years, Mrs. Giddens and a small committee of men and women have been preparing delicious home-cooked meals for as many as ninety Keen-agers from her church and other congregations four times a year.

Here are some of Mrs. Giddens's tips on preparing food for large groups:

"Have people sign up or RSVP in advance so you know exactly how many people are coming; otherwise, you might run out of food. Count on each of these casseroles serving about eight to ten. Multiply out the ingredients needed to feed the folks who've signed up, mix them in big bowls, and cook them in large casserole dishes at the church."

"Make more than you think you'll need. It's the horror of cooking for crowds not to have enough for everyone. You can always take the leftovers to shut-ins. Of course, I never have any leftovers."

"Don't do things that are complicated. In fact, two of my favorite recipes—a cranberry gelatin salad and a hot chicken salad—are two of the easiest. They have very few ingredients, but the blend of flavors is perfect."

"Think about traffic flow. We place two identical food tables in the middle of the room with the eating tables on either side. One side of the room goes to one table and the other side goes to the other. That way, you don't have a bottleneck or an overly long line."

As for making the place look pretty, Mrs. Giddens is a whiz at making a silk purse out of a sow's ear. She bought a dozen small glass vases at the dollar store a few years back, and usually fills them with something seasonal—hydrangeas, azaleas, or even wildflowers from the ditches in the Valdosta countryside. Baskets of popcorn are popular centerpieces on movie day; hollowed-out cantaloupes filled with fresh fruit chunks is another favorite edible centerpiece.

The Keen-agers aren't shy about voicing their opinions about the food. They love anything homemade! Mrs. Giddens, by the way, gets many of her ideas from the Food Network. She gives my show a thumbs-up! "You tell it like it is, and I like the way you're not afraid of using a convenience item if you want to."

This particular menu makes a beautiful plate, but what I really like is the way these flavors blend when you're eating this meal. Mrs. Giddens recommends two trifle-like desserts; the men particularly like the chocolate version.

HOT CHICKEN SALAD

This hot chicken casserole is perfectly seasoned. Lots of celery and almonds give it a nice crunch. You may be inclined to leave off the potato-chip topping, but believe me, it won't be the same without it!

2 cups cooked chicken
breast meat, cubed (You
may use leftover rotisserie
chicken—delicious!)

1½ cups diced celery

½ cup slivered or sliced
almonds

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon grated onion

¼ teaspoon pepper

2 tablespoons fresh lemon
juice

1 cup mayonnaise

½ cup grated sharp Cheddar
cheese

⅔ cup crushed potato chips

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Spray a 13-by-9-inch baking dish with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. In a large mixing bowl, combine the chicken, celery, almonds, salt, onion, pepper, lemon juice, mayonnaise, and cheese. Place the mixture in the prepared baking dish. Spread the crushed potato chips on top. Bake for 20 minutes, or until bubbly.

*Serves 8 to 10,
depending on the appetites of your guests
and the number of menu items*

SQUASH CASSEROLE

No southern cook is worth her salt without a good squash casserole recipe. This one's a classic.

6 medium yellow summer
squash (approximately)
1 small onion, chopped
1½ cups grated sharp
Cheddar cheese
½ cup mayonnaise
10 soda crackers, crumbled
1 egg, lightly beaten
2 tablespoons butter, melted
Salt and pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray an 8-inch square baking dish with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. Peel the squash with a vegetable peeler and cut into ¼-inch slices. Place the squash and onion in about 2 inches of salted water in a medium saucepan. Bring to a rolling boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer until the squash is very tender, about 10 to 12 minutes. Drain the squash. In the same pot, mash the squash and onion with a fork; you should have about 2 cups of cooked squash. Add ½ cup of the cheese, the mayonnaise, and crumbled soda crackers. Stir in the egg and butter. Taste; add salt and pepper as needed. Pour into the prepared baking dish. Top with the remaining 1 cup cheese. Bake for 25 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and the casserole is bubbly.

Serves 8 to 10

BROCCOLI CASSEROLE

This never-fail recipe is a great favorite with everybody.

Two 10-ounce packages
frozen chopped broccoli,
cooked and drained
1 cup mayonnaise
1 cup grated sharp Cheddar
cheese
One 10³/₄-ounce can
condensed cream of
mushroom soup
2 eggs, lightly beaten
2 cups crushed Ritz or
cheese crackers
2 tablespoons butter, melted

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 13-by-9-inch baking dish with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. In a large mixing bowl, combine the broccoli, mayonnaise, cheese, soup, and eggs. Mix well with a metal spoon (the mixture is rather stiff and could break the handle of a wooden spoon). Place the mixture in the prepared baking dish. Top with the crushed crackers and pour the melted butter evenly over the crackers. Bake for 35 minutes, or until set and browned.

Serves 8 to 10

CRANBERRY-PINEAPPLE GELATIN SALAD

You can't have a Keen-ager luncheon without serving a gelatin salad. This one is particularly pretty on the plate next to the squash and broccoli casseroles. Mrs. Giddens often prepares sugar-free gelatins and puddings, as so many older adults have diabetes.

Two 3-ounce packages
raspberry gelatin, regular
or sugar free
½ envelope (1½ teaspoons)
unflavored gelatin
One 8-ounce can crushed
pineapple, packed in its
own juice
One 15-ounce can whole-
berry cranberry sauce
¼ cup finely chopped
walnuts

1. Spray a 4-cup gelatin mold or a 9-inch square pan with vegetable oil cooking spray. Make sure to spray all of the surfaces, especially any decorative indentations.

2. In a medium glass mixing bowl, combine the raspberry gelatin and unflavored gelatin. Add 1 cup boiling water and stir with a metal spoon continuously for 2 minutes, until the gelatin is completely dissolved. Stir in ½ cup cold water. Add the pineapple and juice, cranberry sauce, and walnuts. Stir with a metal spoon until all of the ingredients are completely incorporated. Pour the mixture into the prepared mold, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until firm.

3. About an hour before serving, invert the mold onto a serving platter and allow to sit at room temperature; the salad will release itself and come cleanly from the mold. If you are in a hurry, fill the sink with about an inch of hot water and place the bottom of the mold into the hot water for about a minute, then invert the salad onto a serving platter. Slice the salad into 16 pieces. If using a square pan, cut the salad into 16 servings and carefully remove each one with a small spatula to a serving platter.

Serves 16

SOURDOUGH GARLIC HERB BREAD

Mrs. Giddens makes her own sourdough bread, which she often takes to shut-ins and dialysis patients; it's also a hit at Keen-ager luncheons. You can buy sourdough loaves from any good supermarket bakery. Slice it yourself, or buy it already sliced.

Sourdough bread—at least

1 slice per person

Olive oil

Garlic salt

Fines herbes (equal parts
dried parsley, chervil,
chives, and tarragon,
mixed well)

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

2. Place the bread slices on baking sheets. With a pastry brush, brush each slice of bread with olive oil. Sprinkle with garlic salt and a smattering of fines herbes. Bake for about 10 minutes, until the bread just begins to brown.

3. Serve in large baskets in the center of each table.

STRAWBERRY DELIGHT

No need to make your own; store-bought angel food cake is fine. If you don't have a trifle bowl, any large glass bowl will do.

1 large angel food cake
One 8-ounce package cream
cheese, softened
One 14-ounce can
sweetened condensed
milk, regular or fat free
2 cups whipping cream
2 tablespoons sugar
Two 10-ounce packages
frozen sweetened, halved
strawberries, thawed

1. Cut the angel food cake into cubes about the size of a walnut. In a small mixing bowl, combine the cream cheese and sweetened condensed milk, mixing until smooth and completely blended. In a separate medium bowl, whip the cream with the sugar until stiff.

2. To assemble: In a trifle bowl, layer half the angel food cake cubes, cream cheese mixture, whipped cream, and strawberries. Repeat, layering the remaining ingredients, ending with whipped cream and strawberries.

Serves about 16

CHOCOLATE DELIGHT

One 18½-ounce package
devil's food chocolate
cake mix
Three 3½-ounce packages
instant chocolate pudding
mix, regular or sugar free
2 cups milk, for making
pudding
2 cups whipping cream
2 tablespoons sugar
1 cup chopped pecans,
lightly toasted
Chocolate sauce or syrup,
any variety, for garnish

1. Prepare the cake mix and bake in a 13 by 9-inch pan according to package directions. Let cool thoroughly, then cut into cubes about the size of a walnut.

2. Prepare the chocolate pudding according to package directions.

3. In a medium bowl, whip the cream with the sugar until stiff.

4. To assemble: In a trifle bowl, layer half the chocolate cake cubes, pudding, whipped cream, and nuts. Repeat, layering the remaining ingredients, ending with whipped cream and nuts.

5. Drizzle decoratively with chocolate sauce or syrup.

Serves about 20

The Boss Comes to Dinner

KATHERINE'S MENU

CRAB MOUSSE

VEAL LOIN STUFFED WITH ROASTED BELL PEPPERS, GOAT CHEESE, AND BASIL

ROSEMARY AND GARLIC ROASTED NEW POTATOES (SEE PAGE 33)

MARINATED ASPARAGUS

ALL-DAY MUSHROOMS

CRUSTY FRENCH BREAD (FROM THE BAKERY OR DELI)

PUMPKIN ROLL CAKE

KELLEY'S MENU

GLAZED ROCK CORNISH GAME HENS STUFFED WITH WILD RICE

MARINATED ASPARAGUS

ALL-DAY MUSHROOMS

GOOD BAKERY ROLLS

SAUTÉED RED-SKINNED APPLES

So the boss is coming for dinner. This is the night when you want to show off: your home, your children, your pets, your style, your culinary creativity. In searching for the perfect menu, we turned to Katherine Slagel, of Richmond Hill, near Savannah, who is both a boss (she's an established interior designer) and the wife of David, who has frequently entertained his boss (David's an engineer at International Paper).

Katherine developed a fall menu that will cost you at least \$100, will take you several days to prepare, and will literally put you on the map as a couple to be reckoned with. This is not a menu for the faint of heart, but if you want to prepare a meal that the boss will still be talking about a year from now, this is the one to master.

"Timing is everything when issuing an invitation," Katherine says. "The holidays are filled with

attempts to get together with family and friends, and you are neither to your boss. My mother has always said that it lacks creativity to center entertaining around a holiday; better to accomplish eight for dinner on a quiet October evening than to be a stop on the cocktail circuit in December.

"This is the night for all to glitter and can be a great excuse to hire your first housekeeper, especially if you're working. Up to one week before, iron the cloth napkins, polish the silver, and set the table. I turn plates and goblets upside down to avoid dust. October is still too warm for a fire in the Deep South, but candles of varying heights on a mirror can carry the table and the season if you can't cope with the thought of arranging flowers. On the morning of the party, I usually use a hollowed pumpkin as a bowl to be filled with evergreens, ivy, mums, hawthorne berries, and pomegranates on skewers for a fail-safe, long-lasting arrangement. Don't forget place cards, and please print them from the computer if your handwriting suffers. There's no need to get fussy with the napkin fold.

"Chicken isn't special, beef seems pretentious, and lamb doesn't appeal to all. Therefore, my staple years ago became a luscious veal loin [\$18 a pound, y'all!] stuffed with roasted yellow peppers, goat cheese, and basil. Much of the preparation can be done a day ahead, and the butcher tackles the most difficult parts. In the oven, roast new potatoes alongside the veal. A crab mousse appetizer begins the meal, and dessert is my very yummy Pumpkin Roll Cake. I've never had a sliver of food remaining after this meal.

"Be sure to keep the cocktail hour to thirty minutes. This meal is too special to have tummies full. You and your husband will have just enough time to present your precious children and give a brief tour of the public areas of your home. Then, voilà! Two simple platters, one of meat and potatoes, the other of asparagus, need to be set on the table while your husband clears the salad plates. (You carved, covered, and placed the meat in the cooling oven during his tour.)

"The dessert should be displayed uncut on the sideboard; the coffee should be brewed during dinner. Don't forget sugar and spoon, cream, and sugar substitute. Serve a favorite pinot and remember to sip! This is your shining moment and you've done well!"

If you're not feeling quite so adventuresome and still need a stunning main course, try the recipes from my cousin-in-law Kelley Ort. Kelley is married to my cousin George, and they both grew up in Albany, Georgia, but they haven't lived there for a long time. They've lived the corporate life—seven homes, all over! They are now in Denver, where George is a partner with a large consulting firm. Kelley left her corporate career to be at home with their teenage sons. Kelley and George found that, moving around so much, entertaining was a great way to get to know people. They like to entertain formally because nobody does it much anymore! "We really enjoy surprising everyone with how we can pull off a fancy dinner. We have been fortunate enough to receive a lot of nice china from both of

our mothers, who decided that their formal entertaining days had passed—and can you believe that they had chosen the very same china pattern when they each got married? So, needless to say, we can feed a lot of people on very nice, matching china!”

Kelley and George have served this meal to customers, bosses, friends, etc. Kelley says she always cooks extra because one time, when they had invited customers and expected only the principals, one customer brought his wife! They scrambled at the last minute and, as discreetly as possible, cut the hens in half and served them on this beautiful wild rice. Everyone had plenty. Now, that’s a smart southern girl for ya!



CRAB MOUSSE

One 10³/₄-ounce can
condensed cream of
mushroom soup
One 8-ounce package cream
cheese
1 envelope unflavored
gelatin, softened in ¹/₄ cup
cold water
¹/₂ pound lump crabmeat,
picked through for shell
and cartilage
1 cup finely chopped celery
¹/₄ cup chopped green
onion, white and green
parts
1 tablespoon fresh lemon
juice
1 teaspoon Worcestershire
sauce
¹/₄ teaspoon seasoned salt

1. Grease a 3-cup seafood mold.
2. Combine the soup, cream cheese, and softened gelatin in a glass bowl. Heat for 2 minutes in the microwave, until very hot. Stir well to make sure that the gelatin is completely dissolved and there are no lumps. Add the crabmeat, celery, green onion, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, and seasoned salt. Stir gently but thoroughly.
3. Spoon the mixture into the mold and smooth the top. Cover with plastic wrap and chill until firm. When ready to serve, loosen the edges of the mousse, then invert onto a serving dish. The mousse will slip out in a few minutes. Serve with good crackers, such as Carr’s Table Water crackers.

Serves 8 to 10

VEAL LOIN STUFFED WITH ROASTED BELL PEPPERS, GOAT CHEESE, AND BASIL

Prepare this the day before the party so you won't be stressed. Yes, it's worth the money and the work!

Have the butcher bone and trim all of the fat and membrane from a 4¾-pound center-cut veal rib roast, resulting in a 3-pound oblong boneless veal loin. If you are nervous about butterflying the loin at home, have the butcher do this as well.

2 large yellow bell peppers
One 3-ounce package cream cheese with chives, at room temperature
One 5.3-ounce package basil and roasted garlic goat cheese, or 6 ounces soft fresh goat cheese such as Montrachet, at room temperature
1 bunch arugula, well washed and dried, stems trimmed
16 large fresh basil leaves
1 boneless veal loin (3 pounds), butterflied
14 oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained
2 tablespoons butter
Salt and pepper
8 slices bacon

1. Char the peppers over a gas flame or in the broiler, turning until they are blackened on all sides. Place in a paper bag for 10 minutes to loosen the skins. Peel, seed, and stem the peppers, then cut lengthwise into strips. Set aside.

2. Stir the cream cheese and goat cheese in a small bowl until blended. Set aside.

3. Plunge the arugula leaves into hot tap water with tongs; remove immediately. Drain and pat dry. Set aside. Repeat with the basil leaves.

4. Open the veal like a book and cover with plastic wrap. With a meat pounder or rolling pin, gently pound the veal to an approximately 10-by-12-inch rectangle of even thickness.

5. Overlap the arugula leaves down the center of the veal, forming a 2-inch-wide strip. Cover with half of the peppers, skinned side down. Top with the tomatoes, arranged in 2 rows.

6. Set aside ¼ cup of the cheese mixture for the sauce. Spoon the remaining cheese in an even log atop the tomatoes. Arrange the remaining peppers, skinned side up, over the cheese. Arrange the basil leaves over the peppers.

7. Fold the long side of the veal over the filling. Then begin rolling up the veal jelly-roll-style. Cover the ends of the veal with aluminum foil to enclose the filling completely.

8. Tie kitchen string around the veal roll to maintain a neat log shape. Wrap the string lengthwise around the veal to secure the ends. Cover the veal and reserved cheese separately and chill for at least 6 hours. (This can be prepared 1 day ahead.)

9. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Melt the butter in a large, heavy, shallow roasting pan over medium-high heat. Season the veal with salt and pepper. Brown the veal on all sides, turning frequently, about 10 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat. Drape the bacon over the veal, tucking in the ends.

10. Roast until a thermometer inserted into the center of the meat (*not* the filling) registers 140°F, about 45 minutes. Transfer to a work surface and let stand for 15 minutes. To serve, remove the aluminum foil, bacon, and string.

SAUCE

2¾ cups chicken broth
(canned is fine)
3 medium shallots, finely
chopped
¼ cup fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons capers, drained
½ cup (1 stick) butter, cut
into pieces, at room
temperature
¼ cup reserved cheese
mixture
2 tablespoons chopped fresh
parsley
Salt and pepper

1. Combine the broth and shallots in a heavy medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat and cook until the mixture is reduced to ½ cup, about 20 minutes.

2. Whisk in the lemon juice and capers. Reduce the heat to low; gradually whisk in the butter, reserved cheese mixture, and parsley. Add salt and pepper to taste.

3. To serve, cut the veal crosswise into even slices. Spoon a few tablespoons of sauce onto each plate. Top with 2 veal slices.

Serves 8

MARINATED ASPARAGUS

This is just beautiful—crunchy and delicious.

1½ pounds fresh asparagus,
ends trimmed
¼ cup sugar
¼ cup white vinegar
¼ cup soy sauce
2 tablespoons canola oil
¼ cup finely chopped
pecans or walnuts, lightly
toasted

1. Fill a large frying pan with 2 inches of water and bring to a rolling boil. Plunge the asparagus into the water and remove after 1 minute. Drain immediately and pat dry. Place in a 13-by-9-inch casserole dish.

2. Combine the sugar, vinegar, soy sauce, and oil. Whisk vigorously. Pour over the asparagus. Cover and chill for at least 8 hours.

3. To serve, drain the marinade. Place the asparagus in a serving dish and sprinkle with the nuts.

Serves 8

ALL-DAY MUSHROOMS

Katherine assured me that this unusual recipe was worth the time, but I had my doubts. Katherine was right; these mushrooms were so delicious!

3 pounds whole button mushrooms
½ cup (1 stick) butter
2 cups Burgundy wine
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1 teaspoon dried dill weed
½ teaspoon pepper
2 chicken bouillon cubes
2 beef bouillon cubes

With a wet paper towel, wipe any dirt from the mushroom caps and stems. Place the mushrooms in a large stockpot. Add the remaining ingredients to the pot. The liquid will not cover the mushrooms at first. Cook, covered, over very low heat for 4 hours, stirring occasionally so that the mushrooms are completely coated with cooking liquid. Remove the cover and cook for an additional 4 hours. The mushrooms will shrink by half and become saturated with cooking liquid. Remove with a slotted spoon and serve in a bowl.

Serves 8

PUMPKIN ROLL CAKE

The English toffee pieces can be found in the supermarket next to the chocolate chips. They're a seasonal item in some markets.

CAKE:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup cake flour
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons ground
cinnamon
 $1\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons ground ginger
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon ground allspice
6 large eggs, separated
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup granulated sugar
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup packed light brown
sugar
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup canned pumpkin
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt
Confectioners' sugar

FILLING:

1 teaspoon unflavored
gelatin
2 tablespoons dark rum
1 cup whipping cream
3 tablespoons confectioners'
sugar
10 tablespoons plus $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
English toffee pieces
Confectioners' sugar
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups purchased caramel
sauce, warmed

1. To make the cake: Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line a 15-by-10-by-1-inch baking sheet with parchment paper, then spray with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. Sift the flour, cinnamon, ginger, and allspice into a small bowl. Beat the egg yolks, granulated sugar, and brown sugar with an electric mixer until very thick. Add the pumpkin and combine at low speed until incorporated. Add the dry ingredients and beat at low speed until mixed. In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites and salt until stiff but not dry. Fold into the cake batter with a spatula until most of the white streaks are gone.

3. Spread the batter onto the prepared baking sheet and smooth out the top. Bake until a cake tester comes clean, about 15 to 18 minutes. While hot, dust the cake generously with confectioners' sugar. Loosen the edges and turn the cake out onto a kitchen towel. Fold the towel over the long edge of the cake and roll up lengthwise like a jelly roll. Let cool completely, seam down, for 1 hour in the refrigerator.

4. To make the filling: In a small saucepan, soften the gelatin in the rum. Stir over low heat until the gelatin dissolves. Let cool. Beat the cream and confectioners' sugar in a large bowl until peaks form. Fold in the gelatin and 6 tablespoons of the toffee pieces.

5. To assemble: Unroll the cake. Spread the filling over the cake, then sprinkle with 4 tablespoons of the toffee pieces. Starting at one long side and using the towel as an aid, roll up the cake. Place the cake, seam

down, on a platter. The cake can be prepared 1 day in advance. Cover with aluminum foil and refrigerate.

6. To serve, trim the ends of the cake on a slight diagonal. Dust the cake with confectioners' sugar. Spoon some warm caramel sauce over the top, then sprinkle with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup toffee pieces. Cut the cake crosswise into $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch slices, using a serrated knife. Pass more warm sauce—and enjoy the compliments!

Serves 8 or 9



GLAZED ROCK CORNISH GAME HENS STUFFED WITH WILD RICE

These are absolutely gorgeous when they come from the oven. And your whole house will smell delicious!

GLAZE:

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup light corn syrup or
honey
2 tablespoons apple juice
2 tablespoons fresh lemon
juice
2 tablespoons grated lemon
zest

WILD RICE STUFFING:

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) plus
2 tablespoons butter
1 small onion, minced
1 carrot, diced
1 small celery stalk, diced
4 cups chicken broth
(canned is fine)
1 bay leaf
Leaves from 1 sprig
rosemary, chopped
(discard stems)
Kosher or sea salt
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup wild rice
1 cup white rice
Pepper

Cooking spray, oil, or
butter for greasing
baking dish

4 Rock Cornish game hens
($\frac{3}{4}$ pound each is

1. To prepare the glaze: Combine all of the ingredients in a small bowl. Set aside.

2. To prepare the stuffing: Melt $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the butter in a large saucepan and sauté the onion, carrot, and celery until soft but not brown. Meanwhile, bring the chicken broth to a boil. When the vegetables are cooked, add the bay leaf, $1\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons salt, the wild rice, and 2 cups of the boiling broth. Cook, covered, over medium-low heat for 30 to 40 minutes, or until done. Stir several times to make sure the rice is not sticking. Remove from the heat and allow the rice to sit for 30 minutes to absorb liquid. In the meantime, in a medium saucepan, combine the white rice, the remaining 2 cups boiling broth, the remaining 2 tablespoons butter, and 1 teaspoon salt. Cook the white rice over low heat about 20 minutes, until the liquid is absorbed.

3. When the rices are cooked, drain off any extra broth, fluff with a fork, and remove the bay leaf from the wild rice. Combine the rices, and add salt and pepper to taste.

4. To prepare the hens: Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a baking dish large enough to hold the hens. If using whole hens, remove the giblets and necks. Rinse the hens, inside and out, with cold water and pat dry. Lightly season, inside and out, with garlic salt, seasoned salt, and pepper. Place a lemon slice inside each hen and stuff lightly with the rice mixture. (Place the remaining rice mixture in a microwavable dish, to be warmed later.) Tuck the wing tips of the hens back under the breast and tie the legs together with kitchen string. Place the hens in the prepared baking dish, and

preferable, but may
be up to 1 pound)

Garlic salt

Seasoned salt

4 lemon slices

roast for approximately 1¼ hours, or until a leg can be moved easily up and down. Brush with the glaze about 15 minutes before the cooking time is complete and again after removing the hens from the oven. Let the hens stand for 5 minutes before serving.

5. To serve, warm the rice in the microwave. Spoon enough rice onto each of four dinner plates to make a bed for the hens. Place a hen on top of the rice.

Serves 4

SAUTÉED RED-SKINNED APPLES

This is so easy and pretty on the plate next to those golden hens! Prepare the apples in advance and then just before serving, warm them in the microwave at medium setting to prevent overcooking. Double or triple the recipe so that you can serve this the next night over ice cream. It's delicious!

4 medium, tart, red-skinned
apples (such as Fuji or
Gala)

6 tablespoons butter

½ cup sugar

1½ to 2 teaspoons ground
cinnamon

1. Wash the apples in cold water and pat dry. Cut them into quarters, and cut out the core. Slice each quarter lengthwise into 4 slices.

2. Melt the butter in a medium frying pan over medium heat. Add the apples and sugar and mix well. Sprinkle the apple slices with the desired amount of cinnamon. Reduce the heat to medium low and continue cooking for 12 to 15 minutes, stirring frequently, until the apples have reached the desired degree of doneness. The cooking time will vary depending on the variety of apples being used. When the apples are done, the butter and sugar mixture will have become a delicious syrup. Serve warm.

Serves 4

Comfort Food

THE MENU

QUICK CRAB STEW

GUMBO

CHICKEN DIVAN OR CHICKEN FLORENTINE

SHRIMP AND CRAB AU GRATIN

SHRIMP AND WILD RICE CASSEROLE

CREAM CHEESE POUND CAKE

RASPBERRY AND SHERRY TRIFLE

BLACK BOTTOM PIE

When one of your friends is hurting—she's just gotten divorced, her child has been in a car accident or gotten into trouble, her mother has had surgery, or when a member of the family has died—that's when you spend the afternoon making your best casserole, soup, cake, or pie to deliver for dinner as a show of support. These dishes are comfort food, pure and simple.

When we were looking for someone who always provides for those in need, we turned to Patty Ronning, of Savannah. She'll wash dishes, rearrange your refrigerator, and clean out your closets, if necessary. This lady epitomizes Southern hospitality, thoughtfulness, and fortitude. She's a real steel magnolia.

Patty has this observation for cooks who want to contribute to a meal following a tragedy: "I have found when working 'funeral kitchens' that desserts come up short, or the desserts are all supermarket cakes. I sometimes think I'm the only person still baking. A homemade cake or pie is always appreciated by the family."

For this particular chapter, we've collected a variety of recipes that have been particularly popular with the people who have received them. We've included some soups and casseroles that hold up well in transport and freeze well in the event the bereaved family has too much food on hand. We've also supplied several special desserts that are sure to help your hurting friends feel better.

QUICK CRAB STEW

When Patty Ronning sent in this recipe, I really didn't think it could possibly taste as good as made-from-scratch stew. Wrong! This is so easy and so good! The creamed canned soups give the stew the perfect texture without the fuss of starting with a cream sauce.

When you bring containers of this stew to your friend, label them with the following directions: If refrigerated, vent container. Microwave on 50 percent power until crab stew is hot, about 3 minutes. If frozen, vent container. Reheat on 30 percent power until thawed, about 10 minutes. Then reheat at 50 percent power until hot, about 2 minutes.

2 tablespoons butter
1 small onion, chopped
One 10³/₄-ounce can
condensed cream of
potato soup
One 10³/₄-ounce can
condensed cream of
celery soup
1 soup can milk
1 soup can half-and-half
1 pound claw crabmeat,
picked through for shell
¼ cup dry sherry
Salt and pepper

In a large saucepan, melt the butter and sauté the onion until translucent, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the soups, milk, and half-and-half. Add the crabmeat and bring just to a boil. Add the sherry, and salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot immediately. Or allow to cool to room temperature, then refrigerate or freeze immediately in plastic microwavable reusable containers with lids.

Serves 4 to 6

GUMBO

This has a delicious flavor. If you use bone-in breasts, cook the chicken until it falls apart, then remove the bones before serving. Or you can buy boneless breasts and cut each breast into thirds after sautéing. Serve this over white rice with corn bread on the side.

3 large chicken breasts
(about 2 pounds),
halved and skinned
Salt and pepper
¼ cup vegetable oil
1 pound smoked sausage,
cut into ¼-inch slices
½ cup all-purpose flour
5 tablespoons margarine
1 large onion, chopped
1 green bell pepper,
chopped
3 stalks celery, chopped
8 cloves garlic, minced
¼ bunch flat-leaf parsley,
stems and leaves
¼ cup Worcestershire sauce
5 beef bouillon cubes
One 14-ounce can stewed
tomatoes, with juice
½ pound small shrimp,
peeled
2 cups fresh or frozen
sliced okra

4 green onions, sliced, white
and green parts
¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

1. Sprinkle the chicken with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed Dutch oven. Cook the chicken until browned on both sides and remove. Add the sausage and cook until browned; remove. Sprinkle the flour over the oil; add 2 tablespoons of the margarine and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until brown, about 10 minutes. *Do not let the roux burn or you will have to start over.* Let the roux cool.

2. Return the Dutch oven to low heat and melt the remaining 3 tablespoons margarine. Add the onion and sauté for 10 minutes. Add the green pepper, celery, garlic, flat-leaf parsley, and Worcestershire sauce. Cook, stirring frequently, for 10 minutes. Add 4 cups hot water, whisking constantly. Add the chicken and sausage and cover. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 45 minutes. Add the bouillon cubes, tomatoes, shrimp, and okra. Cover and simmer for 1 hour. Just before serving, add the green onions and chopped parsley.

Serves 8 to 10

CHICKEN DIVAN OR CHICKEN FLORENTINE

Of the many chicken casserole-type dishes I've eaten, this one is just about the best. Adding broccoli makes it divan; adding spinach makes it Florentine. Everyone asks for the recipe.

Two 10-ounce packages
frozen chopped broccoli
(if making divan)

Two 10-ounce packages
frozen chopped spinach
(if making Florentine)

6 chicken breast halves
(about 4 pounds), cooked,
boned, and shredded

Two 10³/₄-ounce cans
condensed cream of
mushroom soup

1 cup mayonnaise

1 cup sour cream

1 cup grated sharp Cheddar
cheese

1 tablespoon fresh lemon
juice

1 teaspoon curry powder

Salt and pepper

¹/₂ cup dry white wine

¹/₂ cup freshly grated
Parmesan cheese

¹/₂ cup soft bread crumbs

2 tablespoons butter

1. Remove the outer wrappers from the boxes of broccoli or spinach. Open one end of each box. Microwave on full power for 2 minutes, until thawed. Drain the broccoli or spinach and put into a large bowl. Add the shredded chicken.

2. In a medium bowl, combine the soup, mayonnaise, sour cream, Cheddar cheese, lemon juice, curry powder, salt and pepper to taste, and wine. Whisk together to make a sauce. Pour the sauce over the broccoli or spinach and chicken. Mix well with a spatula.

3. Place the mixture into an 11-by-7-inch casserole dish or two 9-inch square disposable aluminum foil pans that have been sprayed with vegetable oil cooking spray. Pat down evenly and smooth with a spatula. Combine the Parmesan cheese and bread crumbs and sprinkle over the top. Dot with the butter.

4. Wrap the uncooked casserole(s) securely with plastic wrap, then with aluminum foil. Place each pan into a plastic freezer bag and seal. Freeze. Prepare a label with these instructions: Allow casserole to thaw 24 hours in the refrigerator. When ready to bake, remove the plastic wrap and foil. Bake, uncovered, at 350°F for about 40 minutes, until bubbly.

5. If serving immediately, bake, uncovered, in a 350°F oven for about 30 minutes, until bubbly.

Serves 6 to 8

SHRIMP AND CRAB AU GRATIN

This dish is a treasure; it's the ultimate "I care" casserole. Why? Because it costs an arm and a leg and because you have to be willing to take the time to make an old-fashioned cream sauce.

½ cup (1 stick) butter
½ cup all-purpose flour
½ cup whole milk
½ cup dry white wine
Juice of 1 lemon
½ teaspoon black pepper
⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 pound small or medium
shrimp, peeled and
deveined
1 pound claw crabmeat,
picked through for shell
1½ cups grated sharp
Cheddar cheese

1. Melt the butter in a heavy-bottomed saucepan over very low heat. When the butter is completely melted, stir in the flour with a wooden spoon. Cook for about 1 minute over low heat, stirring constantly. Slowly add the milk. Using a whisk, stir briskly until you have a smooth sauce, about 2 minutes. Add the wine, lemon juice, salt, black pepper, and cayenne and whisk again. Switch to the wooden spoon and keep stirring the white sauce until it is completely smooth and thickened, about the consistency of mayonnaise. Remove from the heat.

2. Bring 2 cups water and ½ teaspoon salt to a boil in a medium saucepan and add the shrimp. When the water returns to a boil, cook the shrimp for 1 minute. Drain immediately. Roughly chop the shrimp and put in a large mixing bowl. Add the crabmeat and, with your hands, toss gently to mix.

3. Pour the sauce over the seafood. With a large spoon, gently combine, taking care not to break apart the crabmeat.

4. Spray an 8-inch square disposable aluminum foil pan with vegetable oil cooking spray (there will be a little left over for a tasty lunch for the cook) or use an 11-by-7-inch casserole dish. Pour the mixture into the pan. Place the grated cheese on top, completely covering the seafood mixture. Wrap the uncooked casserole securely with plastic wrap, then with aluminum foil. Place the pan into a plastic freezer bag and seal. Freeze. Prepare a label with these instructions: Completely thaw in the refrigerator. When ready to bake, remove

the foil and plastic wrap. Bake at 350°F for about 25 to 30 minutes, until bubbly.

5. If serving immediately, bake in a 350°F oven, uncovered, for about 25 minutes, until bubbly.

Serves 4 to 6

SHRIMP AND WILD RICE CASSEROLE

Just because this recipe is easy to put together doesn't mean it's not delicious!

1 package Uncle Ben's
Original Wild Rice
1 pound medium shrimp,
peeled and deveined
2 tablespoons butter
½ green bell pepper,
chopped
½ onion, chopped
One 10¾-ounce can
condensed cream of
mushroom soup
2 cups grated sharp
Cheddar cheese
Salt and pepper

1. Cook the rice according to package directions, minus ¼ cup water. Let cool.

2. Bring 2 cups water and ½ teaspoon salt to a boil in a medium saucepan and add the shrimp. When the water returns to a boil, cook the shrimp for 1 minute. Drain immediately and set aside.

3. Heat the butter in a saucepan and sauté the green pepper and onion until soft, about 5 minutes.

4. In a large bowl, combine the rice, soup, 1½ cups of the cheese, the shrimp, and vegetables. Add salt and pepper to taste. Mix well.

5. Spray a 9-inch square aluminum cake pan or an 11-by-7-inch glass casserole dish with vegetable oil cooking spray. Place the mixture in the pan and top with the remaining ½ cup cheese. Wrap securely with plastic wrap, then with aluminum foil. Place the pan into a plastic freezer bag and seal. Freeze. Prepare a label with these instructions: Completely thaw in the refrigerator. When ready to bake, remove the foil and plastic wrap. Bake, uncovered, at 325°F for 30 minutes, until bubbly.

6. If serving immediately, bake, uncovered, in a 325°F oven for about 20 minutes, until bubbly.

Serves 6 to 8

CREAM CHEESE POUND CAKE

This recipe makes a heavy, dense, beautiful pound cake. It freezes well, should there be any left for freezing!

1½ cups (3 sticks) butter,
softened
One 8-ounce package cream
cheese, softened
3 cups sugar
6 large eggs
3 cups cake flour, sifted
twice
Pinch of salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon almond extract

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F. Grease and flour a 10-inch Bundt pan.

2. Cream the butter and cream cheese with an electric mixer until well combined. Add the sugar. Mix for 7 minutes, until fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating after each until blended. Gradually add the flour, beating after each addition, until all is added and combined. Add the salt, vanilla, and almond extract. Mix again.

3. Pour into the prepared pan. Hit the pan gently on the counter about five times to help settle the batter and remove any air pockets. Bake for about 1½ hours. The cake is done when it pulls away from the sides of the pan and a toothpick inserted comes out clean.

4. Remove from the oven and let cool in the pan for about 15 minutes. Invert the cake onto a wire rack and let cool completely before putting it on a cake plate or wrapping in aluminum foil for delivery.

Serves 12

RASPBERRY AND SHERRY TRIFLE

This has to be prepared, refrigerated for several hours, and eaten the same day or the next day. It does not freeze, so don't try it. You could present it to your distressed friends in several ways: Buy an inexpensive trifle bowl and send it with a note attached to keep the bowl as a gift. Or you could layer the trifle in a 13-by-10-inch disposable aluminum foil pan. Either way, it's a terrific dessert for a crowd.

One 18½-ounce package

Duncan Hines Moist

Deluxe Butter Recipe

Golden Cake mix

1½ cups dry sherry

7 egg yolks

¾ cup granulated sugar

2 cups whipping cream

2 tablespoons confectioners'
sugar

Three 12-ounce packages

frozen sweetened

raspberries, thawed

Whipped cream, for garnish
(optional)

Fresh raspberries, for garnish
(optional)

Mint leaves, for garnish
(optional)

1. Butter and flour a 13-by-9-inch baking pan. Prepare the cake according to package directions, but use ½ cup of the sherry in place of ½ cup water. When baked, let cool in the pan for about 10 minutes, then invert onto a wire rack to cool completely. Cut the cake into large chunks, about 1½ inches wide.

2. Place the egg yolks, granulated sugar, and remaining 1 cup sherry into the top of a double boiler. Whisk until completely combined. Place the top pan over simmering water (do not let water touch the bottom of the top pan). With a wooden spoon, stir over medium heat for about 8 minutes, until the custard is quite thick, about the consistency of mayonnaise. Let cool.

3. Whip the cream with the confectioners' sugar. Take half of the whipped cream and add it to the cooled custard, stirring well.

4. To assemble: In the bottom of a trifle bowl or a 13-by-9-inch disposable aluminum foil pan, layer one-third of the cake cubes, one-third of the raspberries, and one-third of the custard. Continue layering, ending with custard. Take the remaining whipped cream and completely cover the top of the custard. Refrigerate at least 4 hours before serving.

5. Serve with additional whipped cream and fresh raspberries and a sprig of mint, if desired.

Serves 12

BLACK BOTTOM PIE

This is an old Southern favorite. It's a bit time-consuming, but after all, comfort food is a labor of love. It's from Patty Ronning's files.

CRUST:

- 5 tablespoons margarine or butter
- 30 gingersnaps, finely crushed

FILLING:

- 2 cups milk, scalded
- 4 eggs, separated, yolks beaten lightly
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1¼ tablespoons cornstarch
- 1½ ounces (1½ squares) unsweetened chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- 2 tablespoons rum, light or dark
- 1 cup whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar
- ½ ounce (½ square) unsweetened chocolate

1. To make the crust: Preheat the oven to 300°F. Combine the margarine or butter and cookie crumbs with a metal spoon. When well blended, pat evenly into a 9-inch pie plate. (Use a disposable aluminum foil pie pan or an inexpensive glass one that you can give as a gift.) Bake the crust for 15 minutes. Let cool completely.

2. To make the filling: Combine the milk, egg yolks, ½ cup of the sugar, and the cornstarch. Stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, cook in a double boiler for about 12 minutes, or until thickened to about the consistency of mayonnaise. Remove from the heat. Place 1 cup of the custard in a small bowl, add the chocolate, and stir until the chocolate melts and is combined. Add the vanilla. Pour into the pie crust and allow to cool completely before adding the next layer.

3. Soak the gelatin in ¼ cup cold water for 5 minutes. Add to the remaining hot custard and stir for about 2 minutes to make sure that the gelatin is completely dissolved and mixed into the custard. Beat the egg whites with the remaining ½ cup sugar and the cream of tartar until stiff. Gently fold into the custard. Add the rum.

3. As soon as the chocolate custard layer is cool, add the second custard layer. Chill the pie until both layers are set.

4. Whip the cream with the confectioners' sugar. Spread over the top of the chilled pie. Shave chocolate on top of the whipped cream. Refrigerate until ready to serve or take to a friend.

Serves 8

A Teenager's Slumber Party

THE MENU

NIGHTTIME FOOD

MEXICAN PIZZA

OR

CHILI IN A BISCUIT BOWL

MOM'S BANANA DESSERT

INDIVIDUAL BIRTHDAY CAKES (FOR THE MORNING AFTER)

MORNING FOOD

BREAKFAST CASSEROLE

SAUSAGE SWIRLS

ALMOND DANISH SWIRLS

FRUIT KEBABS

Wez Childers, a preschool teacher and director, has been on dozens of overnight church retreats with elementary- and middle-school kids, and has planned a half-dozen slumber birthday parties for her daughter, Paige. She really knows how to plan a party to please teenage girls, which is something that this mother of two sons never had to do!

Here's Wez's formula for a successful slumber party:

- 1. Good food.*
- 2. Fun activities that are optional if the kids aren't interested.*
- 3. More good food.*

"What you decide to do depends on the mix of personalities you wind up with," Wez says. "I always have plenty of stuff planned, but sometimes you have a group that is happy just watching a movie and eating popcorn."

For groups that need more, Wez organizes activities like:

- *A design-your-own-flip-flop party. Buy cheap flip-flops for each guest, and with colorful yarn, paste-on jewels, and artificial flowers, let the girls create their own beach looks.*
- *A design-your-own-pocketbook party. You provide the jewels and basic pocketbook and let the girls do the rest.*
- *A T-shirt party—guests add designs and autographs with fabric paint.*
- *And don't forget the old standby: the hair, makeup, and manicure party. You provide the beauty supplies and let the girls get gorgeous.*

You'll notice that all of our recipes serve six. That's because that's all the teenage girls we think each party mom or dad can handle! You can certainly double the recipes if you dare to spend the night with twelve squealing females!



MEXICAN PIZZA

Save yourself some time and trouble: buy ready-made pizza crusts or use frozen cheese pizzas as the base for your Mexican toppings. These are kids, for goodness' sake! Either way, the addition of salsa and Mexican cheese makes this pizza taste "totally awesome." Patty Ronning provided this recipe.

1 tablespoon vegetable oil
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sliced fresh mushrooms
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped green bell pepper
Two 12-inch pizza crusts or two 12-inch frozen cheese pizzas
1 cup chopped cooked ham
One $2\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce can sliced black olives, drained
Two 16-ounce jars chunky salsa
Two 8-ounce packages shredded Mexican cheese (Monterey Jack, Cheddar, and other mild cheeses combined; available in most supermarkets in the dairy/cheese section)
Shredded lettuce
Sour cream

1. Position the oven rack at the lowest level. If you have a pizza stone, place it in the oven on the rack. Preheat the oven to 425°F.

2. Heat the oil in a small saucepan and cook the mushrooms and green pepper over medium heat until crisp-tender, about 2 minutes. Distribute the vegetables evenly over the crusts. Distribute the ham and olives evenly over the crusts. Reserve 1 cup of the salsa and spoon the remaining salsa evenly over the 2 pizzas. If you don't have a pizza stone, place the pizzas on a baking sheet. They won't be as crisp as they would be if you had placed them directly on the rack, but this is a lot less messy.

3. Bake the pizzas for 10 to 12 minutes, then sprinkle with the cheese. Bake for 7 minutes more. Serve pizza slices topped with the reserved salsa, shredded lettuce, and sour cream.

Two 12-inch pizzas serve 6 teenage girls

CHILI IN A BISCUIT BOWL

The biscuit bowls are very cute. Eat the bowl along with the chili! The recipe calls for Mexican-style stewed tomatoes, but you can use any kind you like. This is yet another of Patty Ronning's recipes.

2 cups Bisquick baking mix
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup whole milk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper
Flour for dusting the work surface
1 pound ground chuck
1 medium onion, chopped
1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
Two 14-ounce cans Mexican-style stewed tomatoes
One 15-ounce can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
2 tablespoons chili powder
1 teaspoon salt
Toppings: grated sharp Cheddar cheese, sour cream, sliced green onions (white and green parts), and corn chips

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F. Invert a 6-cup muffin tin and spray the underside with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. Stir together the biscuit mix, milk, and cayenne. Shape into a ball. Turn out onto a floured surface and knead three or four times. Divide the ball into 6 pieces. Roll each piece into a 6-inch circle.

3. Place 1 dough circle over each muffin cup. Press around the cup to form a bowl shape. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, until lightly browned. Let cool slightly. Remove the biscuit bowls and reserve.

4. Brown the ground chuck over medium heat in a Dutch oven. Add the onion and green pepper and continue to cook until the meat is completely browned and the vegetables are tender. Drain off any fat and discard. Stir in the tomatoes, beans, chili powder, and salt. Bring the mixture to a boil, cover, and reduce the heat to low. Simmer for 35 minutes.

5. When ready to serve, spoon hot chili into the biscuit bowls. Garnish with shredded Cheddar cheese, sour cream, sliced green onions, and corn chips.

Serves 6 teenage girls



Suzie's Peach Pickles (page 108); Buttermilk Corn Bread (page 108)



Marinated Asparagus (page 58); Veal Loin Stuffed with Roasted Bell Peppers, Goat Cheese, and Basil (page 56); Rosemary and Garlic Roasted New Potatoes (page 33)



Clockwise, from top: Apple Martini (page 198); Plantation Iced Tea (page 195); Irish Jasper Green (page 197); Fuzzy Navel (page 196)



Artichoke Rice Salad with Shrimp (page 17); Marinated Tomatoes (page 18); Grilled Pork Tenderloin (page 16)



Bloody Marys (page 43); Pimiento Cheese (page 40); Smoked Turkey Wraps (page 39)



Magnolia Lace Trumpets (page 90); Benne Seed Cookies (page 91);
 Paula's Ultimate Oatmeal Cookies (page 87); Ginger Cookies (page 94); Mexican Wedding Cookies (page 101);
 Savannah Bow Ties (pages 88–89); Chocolate Sandwich Cookies (page 92)



Maple-Glazed Salmon with Pineapple Salsa (pages 120–21)

MOM'S BANANA DESSERT

Serve this yummy dessert after the flip-flops and purses are made, the hair is styled, the toenails are painted. It's a winner. It is another recipe from Patty Ronning's files.

2 cups whipping cream
2 tablespoons sugar, or a
little more if you like it
sweeter
15 Oreo cookies, crushed in
a food processor or by
hand in a plastic bag
using a rolling pin
4 bananas, sliced
2 tablespoons chocolate
syrup
2 tablespoons chopped
pecans, toasted

1. Whip the cream with the sugar until peaks form.
2. Fill a large glass bowl with half of the cookie
crumbs. Cover with half of the banana slices and half of
the whipped cream. Repeat layers with remaining
ingredients. Drizzle chocolate syrup over the top layer
of whipped cream. Scatter the toasted pecans over all
and serve.

Serves 6 to 8

INDIVIDUAL BIRTHDAY CAKES

This recipe calls for 6-inch cake pans; you can find them at a kitchen or baking supply store, or order them from www.wilton.com. This is a morning-after activity; after the girls have breakfast, they can decorate the cakes and take them home to enjoy later. If you can find individual cake boxes from a party store, you can put the cakes in those. Or use pretty, sturdy paper plates and cover each cake with colored plastic wrap. NOTE: You'll need to make two recipes to make six cakes.

FROSTING:

One 3-ounce package cream
cheese, softened
½ cup (1 stick) butter,
softened
One 1-pound box
confectioners' sugar
(about 3¾ cups)
⅓ cup milk

CAKE:

2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1¼ cups all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
⅓ cup milk

Sprinkles or small candies,
for garnish

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease and flour three 6-inch round cake pans.

2. To make the frosting: In a large mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese and butter with an electric mixer until smooth. Add the confectioners' sugar slowly, and beat at low speed until smooth. Add the milk and blend until smooth and creamy. Reserve 1½ cups of frosting and set aside.

3. To make the cake: With the mixer at low speed, add the eggs to the remaining frosting mixture in the bowl. Add the vanilla and beat until blended. Sift together the flour, baking powder, and salt. Add the flour mixture to the cake batter alternately with the milk, beating after each addition until well blended. Pour the batter into the prepared pans. Bake for 25 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Let cool for 5 minutes, then remove from the pans and allow to cool completely on wire racks.

4. While 3 cakes are baking, make a second batch of frosting and batter. Make 3 more cakes.

5. The next morning, place each cake on a piece of waxed paper. Give each guest about 2 tablespoons of frosting and a popsicle stick. Allow each girl to ice her own cake and decorate it with sprinkles or candies.

One recipe makes 3 cakes

BREAKFAST CASSEROLE

You surely don't want to be up cooking bacon and eggs after a sleepless night. Preheat the oven, pop this in, and the whole house will wake up to the smell of something yummy. As a matter of fact, you have to make this savory casserole the night before the party so the bread soaks up all the seasoned egg mixture.

- 5 slices thick-sliced white bread, crust and all, buttered and cubed
- 1 pound mild sausage, cooked, crumbled, and drained
- 3 cups grated extra-sharp Cheddar cheese
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups milk
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce

1. Spray a 1½-quart casserole dish with vegetable oil cooking spray. Place the bread cubes in the casserole. Evenly distribute the sausage over the bread cubes. Sprinkle evenly with the cheese. Combine the eggs, milk, mustard, salt, and hot sauce and mix well. Pour the egg mixture over the bread. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

2. The next morning, remove the casserole from the refrigerator and allow it to sit on the counter for 15 minutes while you preheat the oven to 350°F. Remove the plastic wrap, place the casserole in the oven, and bake for 1 hour.

Serves 6 to 8

SAUSAGE SWIRLS

Two ingredients? We're not kidding! You can't believe how easy and delicious these little numbers are. You can also bake them in advance. Reheat them in a warm oven and they'll taste like you just made them.

Two 8-ounce cans
refrigerated crescent
dinner rolls
1 pound ground sausage,
mild for kids, hot for
adults, or sage if you
prefer

1. Separate 1 can of dough and form into 4 rectangles. Firmly press the perforations to seal. Take the uncooked sausage and cut it into 8 chunks. Using 4 chunks of the sausage, spread each of the rectangles with a thin layer (about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick). Starting at the short end, roll each rectangle tightly into a cylinder. Repeat with the other can of dough and remaining sausage. Place on a plate, cover with plastic wrap, and chill until firm, about 30 minutes, then cut each roll into 4 slices.

2. When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 375°F. Place the sausage swirls $\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes, until golden brown and the sausage is thoroughly cooked.

Makes 32 swirls

ALMOND DANISH SWIRLS

Crescent rolls again? Yes! This time they're rich and sweet with cream cheese, almonds, and almond glaze. Wez modified a recipe from the thirty-fifth Pillsbury Bake-Off contest cookbook to make individual Danish swirls. The original recipe was one large Danish. Wez has served hundreds of these to church groups and kids. These can be made the day before and stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. Bring to room temperature before serving.

6 ounces cream cheese,
softened
1 teaspoon almond extract
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup confectioners' sugar
4 ounces slivered almonds,
chopped fine
Two 8-ounce cans
refrigerated crescent
dinner rolls
1 egg white

GLAZE:

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup confectioners' sugar
4 teaspoons milk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon almond extract

1. In a small bowl, beat the cream cheese, almond extract, and sugar until fluffy. Fold half of the chopped almonds into the cream cheese mixture.

2. Separate 1 can of dough and assemble into 4 rectangles. Firmly press the perforations to seal. Press or roll each piece of dough to form a 7-by-4-inch rectangle, and spread each with about 2 tablespoons of the cream cheese filling to within $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of the edges. Starting at the short end, roll each rectangle tightly into a cylinder. Repeat with the other can of dough and remaining filling. Place on a plate, cover with plastic wrap, and chill until firm, about 30 minutes.

3. Preheat the oven to 350°F while the rolls are chilling. Remove from the refrigerator and cut each roll into 4 slices. Place $\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart on ungreased baking sheets.

4. In a small bowl, combine the egg white with 1 teaspoon water. Brush over the swirls. Sprinkle with the remaining chopped almonds.

5. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes, until light brown.

6. While the swirls are baking, combine the glaze ingredients in a small bowl. Cool the swirls for 3 minutes on wire racks placed over a sheet of waxed paper. Drizzle the icing over the warm swirls.

Makes 32 swirls

FRUIT KEBABS

*K*ids love fruit, especially when it's cleverly presented. You can buy wooden skewers at the supermarket and let the kids make these themselves, or you can make them while the casserole is baking and the Sausage Swirls are rewarming. Depends on how much sleep you've had!

1 pint ripe strawberries,
hulled

Alternate pieces of fruit on skewers.

1 pineapple, peeled, cored,
and cut into chunks

Makes 6 to 8 skewers

Green and red grapes

The Cookie Swap

THE MENU

PAULA'S ULTIMATE OATMEAL COOKIES

SAVANNAH BOW TIES

MAGNOLIA LACE TRUMPETS

BENNE SEED COOKIES

CHOCOLATE SANDWICH COOKIES

MONSTER COOKIES

GINGER COOKIES

RAISIN PUFFS

LACE COOKIES

ROLLED OATMEAL COOKIES

CHEESECAKE CUPCAKES

PEANUT BUTTER BROWNIE CUPCAKES

GINGERBREAD BOYS AND GIRLS

MEXICAN WEDDING COOKIES

People may claim to be counting calories and carbs, but few people in their right mind will turn down a homemade cookie, and you can always find people willing to chuck their diets to attend a Cookie Swap!

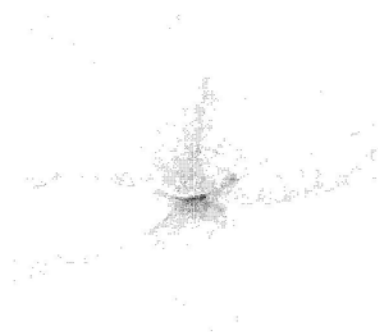
The Cookie Swap is typically a holiday event, held early enough in the season so that cooks still have time to use their new recipes for their friends and family. But this party also makes a nice wedding shower (every new bride needs good cookie recipes to try out on her new husband and neighbors) or baby shower (every mother needs a stash of recipes to take to preschool parties, swim meets, and ballet recitals). And if you happen to be hosting a neighborhood coffee for a political candidate, a Cookie Swap is a good way to draw constituents.

Here's how this very easy party works: The guests bring a plate of their best cookies, along with copies of the recipe. Guests sample the cookies and take home the recipes they like the most. Of course, polite guests take home one of every recipe so as not to hurt anybody's feelings.

All the hostess has to do is provide a lovely tablecloth and a big centerpiece—showy flowers (hydrangeas, tulips, roses, or sunflowers), perhaps with recipes stuck among the flowers on metal holders. Guests bring their cookies artfully arranged on pretty plates, and the plates are placed on the table. For serving, you can provide small glass or china plates (best) or pretty paper plates (acceptable). Serve lemonade, iced or hot tea, and coffee, although ice-cold milk would certainly be appreciated! The best part of this party (aside from eating cookies!) is that guests are encouraged to take home the leftovers, so there is really no cleanup involved.

Here's a tip when baking cookies: You will find that lining your cookie sheets will help your cookies brown more evenly and will keep the cookies from sticking. Silpat, a reusable nonstick liner available in kitchen stores, is fab-u-lous, but parchment paper works well, too. The parchment can be used for several batches of cookies, until it gets sticky. Do wipe the crumbs off between batches, however, so the crumbs don't burn.

We've tried dozens of cookies over the years but have whittled the list down to these favorites. Some are preferred by children, some by adults, but there's something for everyone!



PAULA'S ULTIMATE OATMEAL COOKIES

I created this recipe on my television show. I could have eaten the whole plateful myself—and I just about did!

½ cup (1 stick) butter,
softened
½ cup vegetable shortening
1½ cups packed light brown
sugar
2 eggs
½ cup buttermilk
1¾ cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon freshly grated
nutmeg
1 teaspoon ground
cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
½ teaspoon ground allspice
2½ cups quick-cooking
oatmeal (not instant!)
1 cup raisins
1½ cups chopped walnuts
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

BROWN BUTTER ICING:

½ cup (1 stick) butter
3 cups sifted confectioners'
sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper or nonstick baking mats.

2. Using an electric mixer, cream together the butter, shortening, and sugar at low speed until fluffy. Add the eggs and beat until the mixture is light in color. Add the buttermilk and mix to combine.

3. Sift together the flour, baking soda, salt, baking powder, ginger, nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, and allspice. At low speed, gradually add the dry ingredients. Using a spatula, fold in the oatmeal, raisins, walnuts, and vanilla, blending well. Drop by rounded teaspoonfuls 1½ inches apart onto the prepared cookie sheets. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes.

4. While the cookies are baking, make the icing: In a small saucepan, heat the butter over medium heat until golden brown, stirring occasionally. Remove the saucepan from the heat; stir in the sugar and vanilla. Stir in enough water (3 to 4 tablespoons) to make an icing of drizzling consistency.

5. Remove the cookies to wire racks to cool. Drizzle with Brown Butter Icing while the cookies are still warm.

Makes about 5 dozen

SAVANNAH BOW TIES

call this "my ultimate cookie recipe." I just think it's the best.

- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry
from a 17¼-ounce
package
- ½ cup almond paste
- 1 egg, separated
- ¼ cup packed light brown
sugar
- 2 teaspoons milk
- Flour for dusting the work
surface
- Granulated or coarse sugar,
for sprinkling

CHOCOLATE DIPPING SAUCE:

- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- Six 1½-ounce milk
chocolate bars
- 2 cups whipping cream
- 1 egg yolk, beaten
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Let the puff pastry stand at room temperature for 20 minutes, or until easy to roll. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line cookie sheets with aluminum foil, parchment paper, or nonstick baking mats.

2. Crumble the almond paste into a small mixing bowl. Add the egg yolk, brown sugar, and milk. Beat with an electric mixer at medium speed until well combined. The filling will be very stiff.

3. Unfold the pastry on a lightly floured surface. Roll out into a 14-inch square. Cut the square in half with a fluted pastry wheel.

4. Drop dollops of filling uniformly over one of the rectangles of dough. Spray a piece of waxed paper with vegetable oil cooking spray and use it to press the filling evenly over the dough. Spray the waxed paper as often as necessary to prevent the filling from sticking.

5. Place the remaining rectangle on top of the filling. Using a fluted pastry wheel, cut the dough crosswise into fourteen 1-inch-wide strips, then cut each strip in half to make 28 pieces. Twist each piece twice. Place the twists about 2 inches apart on the prepared cookie sheets. Brush the twists with lightly beaten egg white. Sprinkle with granulated sugar.

6. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until golden. Transfer to wire racks to cool.

7. While the cookies are cooling, make the Chocolate Dipping Sauce: In a saucepan, stir together the sugar, cornstarch, and salt. Crumble the chocolate bars in one at a time. Gradually stir in the cream. Cook, stirring, over low heat until the chocolate is melted. In a

small bowl, combine $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the hot chocolate sauce with the egg yolk. Add the yolk mixture to the pot and cook, stirring, until the sauce comes to a boil. Remove from the heat. Stir in the vanilla and pour into a serving bowl. Any remaining sauce can be poured into custard cups, refrigerated, and served as pudding.

8. Serve the cookies with Chocolate Dipping Sauce.

Makes 28 cookies



MAGNOLIA LACE TRUMPETS

These are so pretty on a plate. When I serve them, everyone oohs and aahs.

½ cup sugar
½ cup (1 stick) butter
⅓ cup dark corn syrup
¾ cup all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon ground ginger
1 tablespoon Irish cream
liqueur (optional)

FILLING:

1½ cups vegetable
shortening
½ cup (1 stick) butter,
softened
1½ cups sugar
1 egg white
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
½ cup hot milk

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a cookie sheet with aluminum foil or a nonstick baking mat. Lightly grease the foil. (If you don't grease the foil, the cookies will stick and be ruined.)

2. In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar, butter, and corn syrup. Cook the mixture over low heat until the butter melts, then remove from the heat. In a small bowl, stir together the flour and ginger and add to the butter mixture, mixing well. Stir in the liqueur, if desired.

3. Drop the batter by rounded teaspoonfuls 3 to 4 inches apart onto the prepared cookie sheet. Bake only 2 or 3 cookies at a time because they will spread, and you must work quickly to form the cones before they cool and become brittle. (If the cookies do become too brittle to roll, put them back in the oven for a minute to soften.)

4. Bake for 9 to 10 minutes, until bubbly and golden brown. Quickly invert the cookies onto another cookie sheet and wrap each cookie around the greased handle of a wooden spoon or a metal cone, available from specialty cookware stores. When the cookie is set, slide it off the spoon or cone; let cool on a wire rack.

5. While the cookies are cooling, make the filling: Using an electric mixer, cream together the shortening and butter. Add the sugar and beat well. Add the egg white and vanilla; beat thoroughly. Add the hot milk, 1 tablespoon at a time, and beat until creamy. Put the filling into a pastry tube fitted with the star tip and fill the cookies.

6. To store: Place unfilled cookies in a single layer in an airtight container. Store at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 3 days, or freeze unfilled cookies for up to 3 months. Thaw the cookies and fill.

Makes 2½ dozen

BENNE SEED COOKIES

Benne seed is another name for sesame seed. This is an old favorite low-country recipe given to Martha by a Savannah caterer, the late Sally Sullivan. It makes dozens of tiny, crisp brown-sugar cookies about the size of a quarter. Buy sesame seeds in bulk from a health-food store or Asian market; they are much cheaper than those little bitty jars from the grocery! If you can find toasted sesame seeds, you don't have to toast them yourself.

1½ cups sesame seeds
One 1-pound box light
brown sugar (2½ cups,
packed)
1½ cups (3 sticks) butter, at
room temperature
2 large eggs
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. If you're using raw sesame seeds, place the seeds in a single layer on a baking sheet. Place in the oven for about 3 minutes, watching carefully. They should just begin to brown lightly. Set aside to cool completely.
3. Lower the oven temperature to 300°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper.
4. Using an electric mixer, cream the sugar, butter, and eggs until very light, about 5 minutes. Sift the flour, baking powder, and salt. Add to the butter mixture and stir with a spatula until combined. Add the vanilla. Stir in the cooled sesame seeds. Drop the batter by ½ teaspoon-fuls onto the prepared cookie sheets, 1 inch apart. It takes just a dab of batter to produce quarter-size cookies. They will spread into perfect circles during baking.
4. Bake until very brown but not burned at the edges, about 14 to 15 minutes. *Important:* Let the cookies cool *completely* on the parchment paper, then peel them away from the paper. Store between layers of waxed paper in an airtight container. These cookies freeze well in tins. They will crumble in a plastic freezer bag.

Makes about 12 dozen

CHOCOLATE SANDWICH COOKIES

Okay, so this recipe is originally from Ohio. It was clipped from a newspaper cooking column by Judy Poad, Martha's husband Gary's cousin. Judy brought these cookies to a family reunion, and they were a big hit. They are appreciated on church youth group road trips.

Two 18½-ounce packages
 devil's food cake mix
4 eggs, lightly beaten
⅔ cup vegetable oil
One 8-ounce package cream
 cheese, softened
½ cup (1 stick) butter, at
 room temperature
3 cups sifted confectioners'
 sugar
½ teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper.

2. In a large mixing bowl, combine the cake mix, eggs, and oil. Beat with an electric mixer at low speed until completely combined. The batter will be very stiff. Pinch off pieces of batter and roll into 1-inch balls. Place 1 inch apart on the prepared cookie sheets and flatten slightly with fingertips. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, until a slight indentation remains when lightly touched. Remove immediately from the cookie sheets with a spatula and cool on wire racks.

3. In a small glass mixing bowl, combine the cream cheese and butter until completely blended. Gradually add the sugar and vanilla and mix at low speed until the icing is smooth. Spread icing on half the cookies and top with the remaining cookies. Store in the refrigerator in large resealable plastic bags.

Makes about 4 dozen

MONSTER COOKIES

Donna Haney, another one of Gary Nesbit's cousins-in-law, brought these cookies to the Pennsylvania family reunion. She always made them before camping trips for her kids. You're reading the ingredients list right: there is no flour in the recipe.

6 eggs
One 1-pound box light
brown sugar (2½ cups,
packed)
2 cups granulated sugar
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 24-ounce jar creamy
peanut butter
1 cup (2 sticks) butter,
softened
8 ounces M&M's
8 ounces chocolate chips
½ cup raisins (optional)
4 teaspoons baking soda
9 cups quick-cooking
oatmeal (not instant!)

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper or nonstick baking mats.

2. In a very large mixing bowl, combine the eggs and sugars. Mix well. Add the salt, vanilla, peanut butter, and butter. Mix well. Stir in the M&M's, chocolate chips, raisins, if using, baking soda, and oatmeal.

3. Drop by tablespoonfuls 2 inches apart onto the prepared cookie sheets. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes. Do not overbake. Let stand for about 3 minutes before transferring to wire racks to cool. When cool, store in large resealable plastic bags.

Make about 6 dozen

GINGER COOKIES

This recipe is the specialty of Gary Nesbit's aunt, Mary Lou Haney, of Reynoldsville, Pennsylvania. "I've been baking these cookies fifty years," says Aunt Mary Lou. "They're one of my family's favorites."

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup vegetable shortening
1 cup sugar
1 egg
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup molasses
2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cloves
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
Additional sugar, for rolling cookies

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper or nonstick baking mats.

2. Using an electric mixer at low speed, cream the shortening and sugar until thoroughly combined. Add the egg and molasses and beat until completely incorporated.

3. Sift together the flour, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and salt and add to the mixture. Stir until combined.

4. Roll the dough into balls about 1 inch in diameter. Roll the balls in sugar. Place $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart on the prepared cookie sheets. Flatten the balls slightly with fingertips. Bake for 12 minutes. Cool on wire racks. Store in resealable plastic bags.

Makes about 3 dozen

RAISIN PUFFS

These are Martha's son Zack's favorite cookie. They've been sent along on many a church choir tour. Aunt Mary Lou Haney, of Reynoldsville, Pennsylvania, provided the recipe.

2 cups raisins
1½ cups sugar
1 cup (2 sticks) butter,
softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
Additional sugar for rolling
cookies

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper or nonstick baking mats.

2. Place the raisins and ¾ cup water in a small saucepan and simmer gently until the raisins have absorbed most of the water and are soft, about 5 minutes. Drain.

3. Using an electric mixer at low speed, cream the sugar, butter, and vanilla until thoroughly combined. Sift together the flour, baking soda, and salt. Stir the dry ingredients and raisins into the butter mixture with a spoon. The batter will be crumbly.

4. Gather about a tablespoon of dough in your fingers and squeeze so dough holds together. Roll into a walnut-sized ball. Roll the balls in granulated sugar and place 1½ inches apart on the prepared cookie sheets. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until lightly browned and puffed. Transfer to wire racks to cool. Store in airtight tins, as these are quite fragile and have a tendency to fall apart if jostled.

Makes about 4 dozen

LACE COOKIES

This is a lacy, crisp, buttery cookie. The batter spreads considerably due to the high butter content and the small amount of flour in the recipe. These are so good that one of our young friends, Cameron Curlee, has requested them in her Christmas stocking instead of candy! Now, that's a good cookie!

½ cup (1 stick) butter or
margarine, softened
1 cup sugar
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 tablespoons all-purpose
flour
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup quick-cooking
oatmeal (not instant!)

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line cookie sheets with aluminum foil, parchment paper, or nonstick baking mats.

2. Using an electric mixer at low speed, cream the butter and sugar until thoroughly combined. Add the egg and vanilla and mix well. Stir in the flour, salt, and oatmeal, mixing well with a spoon. Drop by teaspoonfuls 2 inches apart onto the prepared cookie sheets. Bake for 5 to 8 minutes, until lightly browned. Let cool completely before removing from the sheets; peel cookies away from the lining.

Makes 2½ dozen

ROLLED OATMEAL COOKIES

Martha's mother-in-law, Mona Nesbit, of Statesboro, Georgia, made this recipe regionally famous by serving these to bridge partners, neighbors, and grandchildren.

1 cup vegetable shortening
1 cup packed dark brown
sugar
1 cup granulated sugar
2 eggs, beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1½ cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
3 cups old-fashioned
oatmeal (not instant!)
½ cup chopped pecans

1. Using an electric mixer at low speed, cream the shortening and sugars until thoroughly combined. Add the eggs and vanilla and mix well.

2. Sift together the flour, salt, and baking soda. Add to the sugar mixture and mix well at low speed. Add the oatmeal and chopped pecans and stir with a metal spoon or spatula until mixed.

3. Spoon about half of the dough onto a sheet of waxed paper and shape into a roll. Wrap securely in the waxed paper, twisting the ends to close. Repeat with the remaining dough. Chill overnight in the refrigerator.

4. When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 375°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper or nonstick baking mats. Cut the dough into ⅓-inch slices. Place 1 inch apart on the prepared cookie sheets and bake for 10 to 13 minutes. Transfer to wire racks to cool.

Makes about 4 dozen

CHEESECAKE CUPCAKES

These taste just like miniature cheesecakes without the crust. Decorate with fresh seasonal fruit—a sliver of strawberry (if available) or kiwi for Christmas, a dollop of fruit topping or jam, or a fresh raspberry or blueberry in summer. You can eat about a dozen, so be careful!

Three 8-ounce packages
cream cheese, softened
1 cup sugar
4 eggs
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract

TOPPING:

1 cup sour cream
¼ cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Kiwi or strawberry slivers,
fruit topping or jam,
blueberries or raspberries,
for garnish

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F. Line 24 regular muffin cups with paper cupcake liners.

2. In a large mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese until very smooth. Add the sugar and mix well. Add the eggs and vanilla and mix well.

3. Fill the cups about half full with the batter. Bake for about 25 minutes, until the cupcakes are set and golden brown.

4. Make the topping: Combine the sour cream, sugar, and vanilla and stir well with a metal spoon or spatula. Spoon about a teaspoon on top of each cupcake and return to the oven for 5 minutes to glaze.

5. Remove the cupcakes from the oven. When they can be handled safely, remove them from the muffin tins and let cool completely on wire racks. When completely cool, place them in plastic containers with lids and refrigerate until ready to serve. Just before serving, decorate with slivers of freshly cut seasonal fruit, or jam or fruit topping, or 1 or 2 whole blueberries or raspberries. Serve at room temperature.

Makes 2 dozen

PEANUT BUTTER BROWNIE CUPCAKES

Make these any time you're asked to "bring brownies." They are so pretty, and people love it when they hit the peanut butter.

One 18½-ounce package
Duncan Hines Chewy
Fudge Brownie mix
One 12-ounce package
peanut butter chips or
24 miniature peanut
butter cups

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line 24 regular muffin cups with paper cupcake liners.

2. Prepare the brownie mix according to package directions for cakelike brownies. Fill the cups half full with brownie batter. Place about 1 tablespoon peanut butter chips in the center of the batter, or press 1 peanut butter cup into the batter in each muffin cup until the batter meets the top edge of the peanut butter cup. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes, until the cupcakes are set. When they can be handled safely, remove them from the muffin tins and let cool completely on wire racks. Store in an airtight container.

Makes 2 dozen

GINGERBREAD BOYS AND GIRLS

Kids especially love these. Serve them plain, and allow the kids to decorate with icing piped from a plastic bag with a hole in one corner made with a toothpick. Red, green, and white icing usually suffices for the holidays. Add miniature chocolate chips, jelly beans, sprinkles, and redhots if you like.

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup packed dark brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 stick) butter or margarine, softened
- 2 large eggs
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup molasses
- $3\frac{3}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting work surface
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

ICING:

- 1 cup confectioners' sugar, sifted
- 1 tablespoon milk
- Food coloring as desired

1. Using an electric mixer at low speed, cream the sugar and butter until thoroughly combined. Add the eggs and molasses and mix until combined. Sift together the flour, ginger, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the butter mixture and combine with a spoon or spatula. Remove the dough from the bowl and wrap in plastic wrap; place in the refrigerator until firm, about 1 hour.

2. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. Allow the dough to sit at room temperature for about 15 minutes, until pliable. Take about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of dough at a time and roll onto a floured board until about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick. Cut out with gingerbread boy and girl cookie cutters. You can reroll the scraps.

4. Using a spatula, transfer the cookies from the board to the prepared cookie sheets. Bake for 10 minutes, until just beginning to brown at the edges. Transfer to wire racks to cool.

5. To make the icing: Combine the confectioners' sugar and milk. Divide the mixture into thirds; leave one-third white, and color one-third green and the final third red. Decorate by piping eyes, mouths, buttons, and bow ties.

Makes 18 to 24 cookies, depending on the size of your cookie cutters

MEXICAN WEDDING COOKIES

This recipe came from a wonderful cook, Catherine Taylor, of Savannah, who always made these for her daughters and grandson.

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, at room temperature
½ cup confectioners' sugar, plus more for coating baked cookies
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1¾ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting hands
1 cup pecans, chopped into very small pieces

1. Preheat the oven to 275°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper.

2. Using an electric mixer at low speed, cream the butter and confectioners' sugar until smooth. Beat in the vanilla. At low speed, gradually add the flour. Mix in the pecans with a spatula.

3. With floured hands, take out about 1 tablespoon of dough and shape it into a crescent. Continue to dust hands with flour as you make more cookies. Place them 1 inch apart from one another on prepared cookie sheets. Bake for 45 minutes. Roll in additional confectioners' sugar while still warm. Cool completely on wire racks and store in airtight tins.

Makes 2½ dozen

Hunt Lunch in the Field

THE MENU

BERT'S SOUTHERN FRIED CHICKEN

WILD RICE SALAD

RENE'S COLESLAW

SUZIE'S PEACH PICKLES

BUTTERMILK CORN BREAD

MAGGIE'S DECADENT BROWNIES

LEMON BLOSSOMS

My girlfriend Susan Greene is just about the cutest little southern girl you ever saw. I still think of her as a girl; actually, she's a grandmother now. By the way, her grandchildren call her Bubbles, which suits her perfectly. Well, Bubbles is a fabulous cook and entertainer. When Bubbles started telling me about this latest party she threw, I just began to holler with laughter and said, "Damn, girl, only you would take that one on!"

I was born and raised in Albany (pronounced All-benny), Georgia, in the southwest corner of the state, slap kadab in the heart of some of the best hunting land in the South. I remember as a little girl seeing President Dwight Eisenhower coming there often to participate in the quail hunts.

Bubbles's husband, Phil, is a big hunter himself, and this is where it all started. Phil wanted to entertain around seventy-five of his friends for lunch before an early-afternoon dove shoot on the opening day of dove season, which is always at the beginning of October. The catch? He wanted to feed them in the field, and he wanted the field to look like a beautiful dining room under all the massive live oak trees!

Bubbles realized that she was going to need some buddy help, so she turned to Margaret Jo Hogg and decorator friend Linda Sailors. These three women brought in an oak hutch and dining room table and chairs and created an outdoor living room. They rented round tables and chairs and

covered the tables with fall print tablecloths. Beautiful centerpieces of gold and red autumn foliage graced each of the tables, and the place settings were brown quail china and white linen napkins secured with miniature china doves.

The party was a smashing success! In fact, it was so successful that the meal has become a tradition, although it has been scaled down a little bit. And to think that these three women pulled off this fabulous party in the field . . . and the closest running water was two miles away! Aren't they something?



BERT'S SOUTHERN FRIED CHICKEN

You'll love the crust on this chicken. Be sure to season the chicken early in the day; otherwise, the seasoning just won't penetrate. Bubbles likes to wrap her chicken in tinfoil to keep it warm, but I have to differ with her on that. I'd rather my chicken be room temperature and crispy than warm and not crispy. I put it in tinfoil pans and place parchment paper between the layers. Either way, it's hard to beat!

You'll need a well-seasoned cast-iron skillet to make this (see box, page 105).

1 chicken (3 pounds),
washed and cut into
8 serving pieces (see box,
page 105)

Salt and pepper

2 cups all-purpose or
self-rising flour

3 eggs

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup milk

Peanut oil for frying

1. Liberally sprinkle each piece of chicken with salt and pepper several hours before cooking. Place it in a dish, covered with plastic wrap, in the refrigerator.

2. Place the flour in a plastic kitchen storage bag. When ready to cook, beat the eggs with the milk. Dip the chicken pieces into the egg mixture, then place each piece in the bag. Shake until chicken is coated. Set the floured chicken on a plate while you heat the oil.

3. Pour enough oil into a cast-iron skillet to come only about halfway up the sides of the pan. This is important, as the oil rises when each piece of chicken is

added. (You must be careful not to let the oil spill out while the chicken is frying; it can cause serious burns or cause a grease fire if the grease lands on a gas flame or electric cooktop.)

Turn the heat to medium high; test by adding a drop of water to the oil. If it sizzles, the oil is ready; this takes about 4 to 5 minutes. Place about 4 pieces of chicken into the hot oil. Allow to cook on the first side about 8 minutes, and on the second about 6 minutes, until brown and crispy. Pieces with large bones—the legs and thighs—may need an additional minute per side to get completely done. Remove the chicken from the oil and drain well on brown paper bags. Cook the second batch of chicken.

4. Wrap tightly in aluminum foil to keep warm (like Bubbles does) or place in aluminum pans with parchment paper between layers of chicken (like I do).

Serves 4 to 6

To season a cast-iron skillet, wash a new skillet with hot, soapy water and a stiff brush. Rinse and dry completely. With a paper towel, rub a layer of vegetable shortening on the entire surface, both inside and out, including the lid. Line the lower oven rack with aluminum foil to catch any drips, and place the skillet upside down in a preheated 350°F oven for 1 hour. Turn the oven off and allow the skillet to cool before removing from the oven. After each use, clean with hot water and a stiff brush; never use soap or dishwashing liquid, and never place the seasoned pan in the dishwasher. Dry completely and place in a warm oven to completely dry out before storing.

We can get whole chicken cut into 8 pieces for frying. Buy the chicken parts you like best—breasts, thighs, wings, or drumsticks.

WILD RICE SALAD

The colors of this salad are fantastic—brown, red, green, and white. And what a great dressing! You'll have enough dressing for two recipes of the salad, or you can use it to dress any green salad.

DRESSING:

1½ cups canola oil
½ cup white vinegar
¼ cup freshly grated
Parmesan cheese (use pre-
grated if you're in a hurry)
1 tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon celery seed
½ teaspoon ground white
pepper
½ teaspoon dry mustard
¼ teaspoon paprika
1 clove garlic, minced (Hey,
girls, if you're looking for
convenience, this comes in
a jar; use 1 teaspoon.)

½ teaspoon salt
1 cup wild rice (Don't
cheat—use the real stuff!)
One 6-ounce jar marinated
artichoke hearts, drained
and halved, marinade
reserved
One 6-ounce can LeSueur
early June peas, well
drained, or any 6-ounce
can green peas

1. Combine all the dressing ingredients in a jar with a tight-fitting lid and shake well. Refrigerate until ready to use.

2. In a 1-quart pot with a lid, bring 2 cups water and the salt to a boil. Add the rice and stir well. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer for 45 minutes. Drain excess liquid from the rice.

3. In a large bowl, combine the rice, artichoke hearts, peas, green pepper, green onions, tomatoes, reserved marinade, and half of the dressing. Toss well. Cover and chill. Just before serving, toss again and taste. Add some of the remaining dressing, if desired. Sprinkle with the almonds and serve.

Serves 8

⅓ cup coarsely chopped
green bell pepper
3 green onions, chopped,
white and green parts
1 cup cherry or grape
tomatoes, halved
¼ cup slivered almonds,
toasted

RENE'S COLESLAW

The colors of this coleslaw are beautiful next to the wild rice salad, and the dressing is tangy/sweet. The leftovers are terrific the next day. You can take the easy way out: buy the cabbage already shredded in the produce department. Do not buy angel hair shredded cabbage, however, as it becomes too limp when dressing is added.

5 cups shredded cabbage
½ cup almonds, toasted
1½ cups dried cranberries
½ cup diced celery
½ cup chopped green
onions, white and green
parts
½ cup chopped green bell
pepper

1. Combine the cabbage, almonds, cranberries, celery, green onions, and green pepper in a large plastic bowl with a snap-on lid.

2. Combine all of the dressing ingredients, adding salt and pepper to taste, and refrigerate until ready to serve. Pour the dressing on just before serving. Stir well.

Serves 10 to 12

DRESSING:

½ cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon sweet pickle
relish
1 tablespoon honey mustard
1 tablespoon honey
Salt and pepper

SUZIE'S PEACH PICKLES

Bubbles made her own peach pickles, but you can often find them in the grocery store. Southerners often have peach pickles on a relish tray for Thanksgiving.

FOR EACH QUART
CANNING JAR:

1 cup white vinegar
2 cups sugar
14 very small peaches,
peeled, each stuck with
2 to 4 cloves
Cinnamon sticks (optional)
1 tablespoon allspice in a
mesh boiling bag
(optional)

Bring the vinegar and sugar to a boil. Add the peaches and cook until tender. Cinnamon sticks may be boiled with the peaches and added to the jars. Allspice in a mesh boiling bag may be boiled with the peaches, but do not put into the jar. Place the peaches into sterilized quart jars and cover with syrup. Seal according to the canning instructions that come with the jars. Serve cold.

BUTTERMILK CORN BREAD

Here's your basic buttermilk corn bread. Southerners like theirs with butter and jelly (Bubbles served mayhaw jelly) or syrup. Mayhaw jelly is made from the tart red berries of the mayhaw trees that grow only in southwest Georgia; try the Internet for mail-order sources. It's worth the search!

1 cup yellow cornmeal
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon baking soda
1 egg, beaten
1 cup buttermilk

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Grease well a 9-inch square pan or two nonstick 12-cup miniature muffin tins.

2. Combine all of the dry ingredients in a small mixing bowl. Add the egg and buttermilk. Stir with a fork until just blended. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake for 20 minutes for a square pan, or 15 minutes for miniature muffins. Serve with butter and mayhaw jelly. (Some guests asked for maple syrup with their corn bread muffins, but they were flat out of luck.)

Makes 16 small squares or 24 miniature muffins

MAGGIE'S DECADENT BROWNIES

These are so fudgy and rich, you can't have but a little taste. Then, a minute later, you want just one more taste. The next thing you know, the pan is empty!

4 ounces (4 squares)
unsweetened chocolate
1 cup (2 sticks) butter—no
substitute!
4 large eggs
2 cups sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup all-purpose flour,
sifted

FROSTING:

4 ounces (4 squares)
unsweetened chocolate
1 cup (2 sticks) butter,
softened
½ cup pasteurized egg
substitute, such as Egg
Beaters
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
One 1-pound box
confectioners' sugar, sifted
4 cups mini marshmallows

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 12-by-9-inch baking pan.

2. Melt the chocolate and butter in a 2-quart bowl in the microwave on high for 2 minutes. Stir until the chocolate is completely melted. Add the eggs, sugar, and vanilla and mix well with a spatula. Add the flour and stir to combine. Spread the batter evenly in the prepared pan. Bake for 25 minutes.

3. While the brownies are baking, make the frosting: Melt the chocolate and butter in a medium bowl in the microwave on high for 3 minutes. Stir until the chocolate is completely melted. Add the egg substitute, vanilla, and sugar and stir with a spoon until smooth. Stir in the marshmallows; they will soften but not melt completely. Spread the frosting over the warm brownies. The frosting will set up when the brownies are completely cooled. When cool, cut into 1½-inch squares and store in the refrigerator in a plastic container with a snap-on lid.

Makes 4 dozen

LEMON BLOSSOMS

These little cakes are literally dunked in lemony glaze. The vegetable oil gives the glaze a little crispness. Betcha your guests can't eat just one!

This recipe makes 60 little "blossoms." If you don't have enough muffin tins or oven space to make all 60 at once (and I don't know anyone who does!), you can bake two or three tins at a time. While the first cakes are cooling, wash, dry, respray, and refill the tins, then bake.

One 18½-ounce package
yellow cake mix

One 3½-ounce package
instant lemon pudding
mix

4 large eggs

¾ cup vegetable oil

GLAZE:

4 cups confectioners' sugar

⅓ cup fresh lemon juice

Grated zest of 1 lemon

3 tablespoons vegetable oil

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray miniature muffin tins with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. Combine the cake mix, pudding mix, eggs, and oil and blend well with an electric mixer until smooth, about 2 minutes. Pour a small amount of batter (about a tablespoon) into each cup of the prepared tins. Bake for 12 minutes. Turn out onto a tea towel.

2. To make the glaze: Sift the sugar into a mixing bowl. Add the lemon juice, zest, oil, and 3 tablespoons water. Mix with a spoon until smooth. With fingers, dip the cupcakes into the glaze while they're still warm, covering as much of the cake as possible. Or spoon the glaze over the warm cupcakes, turning them to completely coat. Place on wire racks with waxed paper underneath to catch any drips. Let the glaze set thoroughly (this may take an hour) before storing in containers with tight-fitting lids.

Makes 5 dozen

A Working Lunch

MENU

SALMON SALAD

CURRY CHICKEN SALAD

CORN, AVOCADO, AND TOMATO SALAD

BAKERY CROISSANTS, SLICED

GOURMET POTATO CHIPS

DOUBLE RUM CAKE

BROWN SUGAR CHEWIES

*This chapter is very near and dear to my heart. You might ask, "Why is that, Paula?" Well, it was exactly sixteen years ago that I took responsibility for my own life. The first step in doing this was creating a business that would afford my sons and me financial independence. I felt like there might be folks out there chained to their desks during lunch hour with growling bellies, so I decided that I would prepare wonderful little bag lunches and send my sons out to sell 'em. I named my business *The Bag Lady*. Boy howdy, I had no idea how right I was! Before I knew it, I was feeding a couple hundred people a day. I lovingly prepared these meals fresh every morning; some of them cold, some of them hot, some of them fattening, some of them light. The following recipes I've chosen to share with y'all in this chapter remind me very much of those *Bag Lady* days. These dishes can be whipped up from last night's leftovers and are just perfect to pack up for today's lunch.*

So, y'all remember these recipes the next time you're having a working lunch and you're asked to bring a covered dish. I promise they'll be a big hit!

SALMON SALAD

I made this on my show. It's a great summer dish and even better if you have salmon left over from the night before. Serve this over lettuce or as a sandwich filling.

2 cups cooked, flaked
salmon
2 hard-boiled eggs, mashed
1 red or green bell pepper,
diced
1 cucumber, peeled, seeded,
and diced
½ cup chopped onion
4 to 5 tablespoons
mayonnaise, or enough to
moisten
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
(optional)
Salt and pepper
Juice of ½ lemon

1. Gently toss together the salmon and hard-boiled eggs in a large glass bowl.

2. In a separate bowl, combine the bell pepper, cucumber, onion, and mayonnaise. Add the cayenne, if using, and salt and pepper to taste, and stir to combine. Pour the mixture over the salmon, add the lemon juice, and toss lightly to combine.

Serves 4 to 6

CURRY CHICKEN SALAD

This is a recipe from Dottie Courington, a Savannah lawyer, who was served the salad by her aunt Myrtle Donaldson, of Statesboro. When Aunt Myrtle died, this recipe passed to Dottie.

Serve this over lettuce or as a sandwich filling.

1 large roasted or rotisserie chicken (3 to 3½ pounds), cut into 1-inch cubes

1 cup chopped celery

One 8-ounce can sliced or chopped water chestnuts, drained

2 cups seedless red grapes, halved

One 2-ounce package slivered almonds

1. Gently combine the chicken, celery, water chestnuts, grapes, and almonds in a large glass bowl.

2. In a separate bowl, combine the dressing ingredients and mix well. Add to the chicken mixture and stir gently to combine. Taste, and add salt if desired.

Serves 6 to 8

DRESSING:

1 cup mayonnaise

1 teaspoon soy sauce

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1½ teaspoons curry powder

1 tablespoon prepared chutney, like Major Grey's

Salt

CORN, AVOCADO, AND TOMATO SALAD

The other night my brother, Bubba, had a small group of us over for dinner for his fabulous chickens that he cooks on the grill. My niece, Corrie, Bubba's daughter, is twenty-three years old and is turning into a real good cook. As we were getting the meal all put together, Corrie pulled out of the refrigerator a dish that I had not seen before. I said, "What's this?" Corrie said, "Oh, it's a delicious corn salad recipe that I got out of that wonderful magazine Real Simple." I took one bite of it and I was in love! It was so, so good. Naturally, I asked Corrie for the recipe and she gladly shared it with me. Corrie uses fresh hot corn: she cuts the corn off the cob, and mixes the salad together while it's still hot. The avocado almost turns into a paste. I loved it that way!

Here is the recipe as it appeared in Real Simple, or you can make it Corrie's way.

I highly recommend using fresh corn; my second choice would be frozen niblets.

2 cups cooked corn, fresh or frozen

1 avocado, diced into ½-inch pieces

1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved

½ cup finely diced red onion

1. Combine the corn, avocado, tomatoes, and onion, in a large glass bowl.

2. Whisk together the dressing ingredients in a glass bowl or measuring cup. Pour over the salad and toss gently to mix.

Serves 4 to 6

DRESSING:

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon fresh lime juice

½ teaspoon grated lime zest

¼ cup chopped cilantro

¼ teaspoon salt

⅛ teaspoon pepper

DOUBLE RUM CAKE

Let's just say that no matter how the working lunch went, it will end on a decidedly good note when you remove this rum cake from your cake carrier. The aroma of rum and the delectable color of the cake are a winning combination! The recipe comes from Jeanie Simmons, a Savannah preschool teacher who has contributed this cake to many a meeting.

One 18½-ounce package
yellow cake mix

One 3½-ounce package
instant vanilla pudding
mix

½ cup rum, light or dark

½ cup vegetable oil

4 large eggs

½ cup chopped pecans

RUM SYRUP:

1 cup sugar

½ cup (1 stick) margarine

¼ cup rum, light or dark

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F. Liberally spray a non-stick 2-quart Bundt pan with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. Using an electric mixer at low speed, blend the cake mix, pudding mix, rum, oil, and ½ cup water. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.

3. Evenly distribute the pecans in the bottom of the prepared Bundt pan. Pour the batter on top of the pecans. Bake for 50 to 55 minutes, until a knife inserted an inch from the center comes out clean; do not remove the cake from the pan.

4. Make the rum syrup: In a small saucepan, bring the sugar, margarine, rum, and ¼ cup water to a boil and cook for 3 minutes. With a fork, make holes in the top of the cake. Pour the syrup over the cake and let sit for 30 minutes while the syrup is absorbed.

5. Invert the pan onto a serving plate. Allow it to sit for several minutes; the cake will loosen from the pan.

Serves 12 to 16

BROWN SUGAR CHEWIES

These are always a surprise, because people are expecting brownies. Instead, they get a chewy butterscotch treat!

¼ cup (½ stick) butter
1 cup packed light brown sugar
1 egg, beaten
¾ cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ cup chopped pecans
Confectioners' sugar for dusting

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray an 8-inch square pan with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. In a small saucepan, melt the butter. Turn off the heat, add the brown sugar, and stir until smooth. Stir in the egg. Sift together the flour and baking powder and stir into the brown sugar mixture. Add the vanilla and pecans.

2. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 20 minutes.

3. When cool, dust the top with a sifting of confectioners' sugar. After cutting into squares, remove from the pan and store in a plastic container with a tight-fitting lid.

Makes 16 small squares

The Saturday Night Grill Party

THE MENU

ROSEMARY CHICKEN QUARTERS

MARINATED FILET MIGNON

MAPLE-GLAZED SALMON WITH PINEAPPLE SALSA

MINTED LAMB

TERIYAKI SHRIMP

POTATO AND EGG SALAD

TOMATOES WITH BLUE CHEESE

VIDALIA ONION CORN BREAD

PEACH CREAM TART

*I*n the South, we can dine outdoors for much of the year (okay, so we fight the gnats and the mosquitoes, but we enjoy the outdoors anyway). What's so nice about an outdoor party is that the guests can stand around, chat, watch, and smell the main course cooking. There's nothing to pique the appetite like the smell of something on the grill!

You may decide to eat outdoors, if you have the right setting and nice weather, or you may choose the comfort of air-conditioning. Whichever way you go, choose plates in summer colors—Fiestaware comes to mind—and lots of candles to set the mood. A simple bowl of fresh summer fruit can serve as a centerpiece.

When planning a Saturday Night Grill Party, by all means keep it simple. I happen to like cold accompaniments with my grilled meat—a classic potato salad and sliced vine-ripe tomatoes suit me to a T. For those who want something a little more sophisticated, I've included a tomato salad with crumbled blue cheese. The Vidalia onion corn bread is the perfect taste to round out the meal. You can have everything done before the party so you can stand around and sniff with your guests.

Polish off the evening with a peach cream tart, which you can make with fresh peaches, if you're

lucky like we are in June, or canned peaches if you live where the fresh peaches taste like cardboard. I always opt not to serve an appetizer. Why spoil your appetite for the main course? Here are some grilling tips:

- *Allow the meat to marinate up to 24 hours if possible.*
- *Buy grill baskets with nonstick coating for easier cleanup, and spray them with vegetable oil cooking spray to keep foods from sticking.*
- *Have your grill very hot before you add the food.*
- *Don't leave grilling food even for a minute. If you have a flare-up, your entire meal is ruined.*

Choose whatever turns you on from the dishes that follow, or do what I sometimes do and cook a little bit of everything and let your guests have a mixed grill!

ROSEMARY CHICKEN QUARTERS

I really like dark chicken meat—it's more flavorful and more tender than breast meat. Chicken quarters (thigh and drumstick) often go on sale, making this an inexpensive main course.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 2 tablespoons butter per
chicken quarter, softened | 1. Mix the butter and rosemary until well combined. Lift up the skin covering the leg and thigh and massage 2 tablespoons of rosemary butter evenly underneath the skin of each chicken quarter. Sprinkle the chicken with salt and pepper to taste. Store in the refrigerator in a glass dish covered with plastic wrap. |
| 1 tablespoon finely chopped
fresh rosemary per
chicken quarter | 2. When ready to cook, position the chicken over indirect heat and grill at medium heat until cooked through, about 45 minutes. Do not turn, as the butter will spill out of the pocket. The chicken will brown nicely on all sides. |
| 1 chicken quarter per
person | |
| Salt and pepper | |

MARINATED FILET MIGNON

Okay, these are the best and, dad gum it, the most expensive! That's why this recipe is so perfect for that special daddy on Father's Day.

- 1 small filet mignon
per person, about
1¾ to 2 inches thick

MARINADE (ENOUGH FOR 6 FILETS):

- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped
fresh rosemary
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped
fresh thyme

FLAVORED BUTTER (ENOUGH FOR 6 FILETS):

- 2 tablespoons butter, at
room temperature
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire
sauce
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1. Place the filets in a resealable plastic bag. Combine the marinade ingredients in a glass bowl or measuring cup. Pour the marinade over the filets, seal the bag, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or overnight.

2. When ready to cook, place the filets over hot coals and grill for about 10 minutes per side, or until the internal temperature is between 140° and 150°F (medium rare).

3. Thoroughly combine the butter, Worcestershire sauce, and mustard. Set aside until the steaks are cooked.

4. Remove the filets to a warm platter. Place about a teaspoon of flavored butter on top of each filet.

MAPLE-GLAZED SALMON WITH PINEAPPLE SALSA

There just ain't no better fish for grilling than salmon. Salmon's rich flavor and the smoke from the grill make for a delicious combination. This is almost better the next day, served cold in a salad. Yum!

1 salmon fillet (6 ounces)
per person

MARINADE
(ENOUGH FOR 4 FILLETS):

1 tablespoon maple syrup
1 tablespoon teriyaki sauce
1 tablespoon pineapple juice
1 teaspoon minced fresh
ginger
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 tablespoon Southern
Comfort or other
bourbon

1. Place the salmon fillets in a resealable plastic bag. Combine the marinade ingredients in a glass bowl or measuring cup. Pour the marinade over the fillets, seal the bag, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or overnight.

2. In a grill basket sprayed with vegetable oil cooking spray, grill the salmon skin side down over hot coals. Do not turn! Watch for the fish to cook from the bottom up; it takes about 15 to 20 minutes. Serve with Pineapple Salsa: Two variations are given on page 121.

PINEAPPLE SALSA I

We've included two recipes for pineapple salsa because we love them both and can't decide which one we like more! The first is cooked; the second isn't and doesn't have the tomato.

- 1 medium ripe tomato,
chopped into small cubes
- ¼ cup chopped bell pepper
- 2 pickled jalapeño pepper
slices, finely chopped
- ½ cup pineapple chunks,
fresh or canned in juice
or syrup
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar

Place all of the ingredients in a small saucepan. Simmer over low heat for about 5 minutes. Let cool. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve with salmon.

PINEAPPLE SALSA II

This recipe was contributed by Sue Off, of Tybee Island, near Savannah. She also serves it with grilled mahi mahi.

- 1 cup fresh pineapple, finely
diced
- ¼ cup chopped red bell
pepper
- ¼ cup chopped green bell
pepper
- ½ fresh jalapeño pepper,
seeded and finely minced
- 1 tablespoon finely minced
red onion
- 2 tablespoons minced
cilantro leaves
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime
juice
- 1 teaspoon sugar

Place all of the ingredients in a small glass bowl and toss to combine. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve with salmon.

MINTED LAMB

You won't find a better marinade for lamb than this. The flavor of the mint really penetrates the meat. You definitely won't have folks hollering "Pass the mint jelly!"

- 1 small boneless lamb
shoulder (about 3 pounds)

MARINADE:

- ½ cup olive oil
2 tablespoons chopped fresh
thyme
2 cloves garlic, crushed
¼ cup honey
¼ cup wine vinegar
2 tablespoons chopped fresh
mint

1. Place the lamb in a resealable plastic bag. Combine the marinade ingredients in a glass bowl or measuring cup. Pour the marinade over the lamb, seal the bag, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or overnight.

2. Grill the lamb over indirect heat for about 45 minutes, until a meat thermometer registers 180°F.

Serves 4

TERIYAKI SHRIMP

Don't be tempted to cook these shrimp with their shells on. They'll stick to the grill and the shells will be almost impossible to remove.

- 1 pound large shrimp,
peeled and deveined

MARINADE:

- 1 tablespoon fresh lime
juice
¼ cup dry sherry
¼ cup olive oil
¼ cup teriyaki sauce

1. Place the shrimp in a resealable plastic bag. Combine the marinade ingredients in a glass bowl or measuring cup. Pour the marinade over the shrimp, seal the bag, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight.

2. One hour prior to grilling, start soaking wooden skewers.

3. When ready to cook, thread the shrimp on the skewers, leaving a little space between each shrimp. Place the skewers in a grill basket sprayed with vegetable oil cooking spray. Grill over high heat for about 5 minutes on each side, or just until cooked through. Serve hot or cold.

Serves 2 or 3

POTATO AND EGG SALAD

This is just delicious. You can make it early in the day and refrigerate if you like it cold, or if you're like me and want it warm, you can make it at the last minute.

5 to 6 medium white

potatoes, peeled and cubed

6 hard-boiled eggs, peeled

and chopped

½ cup finely chopped celery

1½ cups mayonnaise

Salt and pepper

Boil the potatoes until tender, about 15 minutes.

Drain and let cool. Place in a large bowl and add the eggs and celery. Gently stir in the mayonnaise, being careful not to mash the potatoes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Serves 4 to 6

TOMATOES WITH BLUE CHEESE

This is one of those dishes you'll definitely eat with your eyes first! Use whatever type of lettuce looks freshest at the market, and the ripest tomatoes.

1 head romaine or 2 heads

Boston lettuce, washed,
dried, and chopped

2 ripe tomatoes, sliced

1 cup crumbled blue cheese

1 cup fresh basil leaves, cut
into ribbons

1. Arrange the lettuce on a large platter. Distribute the tomato slices, blue cheese, and basil attractively over the lettuce.

2. Make the dressing: In a glass jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine the dressing ingredients and shake well. Drizzle the dressing over the salad just before serving.

DRESSING:

3 tablespoons fresh lemon
juice

½ cup vegetable oil

2 tablespoons sugar

1 small clove garlic, crushed

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon dry mustard

Serves 6 to 8

VIDALIA ONION CORN BREAD

*V*idalia, Georgia, is the home of the best onion ever created—the Vidalia sweet onion. Vidalia onions get sweeter when they are cooked, so this is sort of a sweet-savory corn bread. If you can't get Vidalias, you can use any sweet onion that your market sells.

¼ cup (½ stick) butter
1 large Vidalia or other
sweet onion, chopped
One 8-ounce package corn
bread/muffin mix
1 egg, beaten
⅓ cup whole milk
1 cup sour cream
1 cup grated sharp Cheddar
cheese
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon dried dill weed

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F. Spray an 8-inch square baking pan with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. In a medium saucepan, melt the butter and sauté the onion until tender but not brown, about 3 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and add the muffin mix, egg, milk, sour cream, ½ cup of the cheese, the salt, and dill weed. Stir to combine. Pour into the prepared pan and top with the remaining ½ cup cheese. Bake for 30 minutes, until set and a toothpick inserted into the center of the corn bread comes out clean. Allow to cool slightly before cutting into squares.

Makes about 16 squares

PEACH CREAM TART

This is so pretty and good. Make it a couple of hours before the party and leave it at room temperature. The crust is like a shortbread cookie: you don't have to roll it out, and it doesn't get soggy.

CRUST:

1¼ cups all-purpose flour
½ cup (1 stick) butter,
softened
2 tablespoons sour cream

FILLING:

About 6 medium peaches,
peeled and sliced, or one
28-ounce can and one
16-ounce can sliced
peaches in light syrup,
well drained
3 large egg yolks
¾ cup sour cream
¾ cup sugar
¼ cup all-purpose flour

GLAZE:

½ cup peach preserves or
jelly
1 tablespoon frozen
lemonade concentrate

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.

2. To make the crust: Place the flour, butter, and sour cream in a food processor and pulse to combine. When the dough has formed a ball, pat with lightly floured hands into the bottom and sides of an ungreased 10-inch tart pan with a removable bottom and ½-inch sides, or a round au gratin dish. Bake for about 15 minutes, until the crust is set but not browned. Let cool while preparing the filling. Lower the oven temperature to 350°F.

3. To make the filling: If using fresh peaches, peel and thickly slice the peaches. Arrange the fresh or canned peach slices in overlapping circles on top of the crust, until it's completely covered. Overfill the crust, as peaches will draw up during cooking.

4. Combine the egg yolks, sour cream, sugar, and flour and beat until smooth. Pour the mixture over the peaches. Place the tart pan on a baking sheet and bake for about 1 hour, until the custard sets and is pale golden in color. Cover with an aluminum foil tent if the crust gets too dark. Transfer the tart pan to a wire rack to cool. When cool, remove the side wall of the pan.

5. To make the glaze: Combine the preserves or jelly and lemonade. Spread with a pastry brush over the top of the warm tart. Serve the tart warm, at room temperature, or chilled.

Serves 6

A Weekend Campout

THE MENU

HAMBURGER PIE

CHICKEN BREAST PIE

PORK CHOP AND PINEAPPLE PIE

BLACKENED FISH

BAKED GRILLED POTATOES

ZUCCHINI OR GREEN BEAN BUNDLES

BOB'S DUTCH-OVEN BREAD

S'MORES

DUTCH-OVEN PEACH COBBLER

TORTILLA DESSERT WRAPS

BEASON BREAKFAST BURRITOS

Who would have thought that a show about cooking around a campfire would have been a hit? But the episode called "Campfire Cooking" was one of the most popular I have ever done. No matter how sophisticated we get, some people still like to spend the night out under the stars, thank goodness!

Lucky us to find Scoutmaster Robert English, of Savannah, who has been taking boys on camping trips for more than forty-six years! Mr. English has been known to dump out a boy's backpack before a camping trip, leaving behind all the candy bars and commercial snacks. Instead, he prefers to teach the boys how to dine around a campfire on chicken breasts or pork chops topped with fresh vegetables. Meals are often polished off with his famous Dutch-oven Peach Cobbler (page 134). This is gourmet camping, y'all!

New coolers have really made the job of keeping food cold easier, Mr. English says. He also freezes water in milk jugs. The ice stays frozen longer, and there's very little mess, as the ice melts into the jug. Keeping food cold on a camping trip is critical for food safety. Food defrosts quicker

than you'd think in the South, so you will notice that we have suggested freezing all of our entrées and then packing them into the cooler just prior to the trip. Items will thaw out at different times, and you just pick the packages that are the most thawed and cook those first. If you are camping in climates where it's cool, you can skip the freezing step and safely refrigerate the items, and then pack in coolers and eat within three days. I freeze everything, because you might be gone several days and the item you want to cook on night three or four will have that long to defrost. You want to err on the side of safety. If food has reached room temperature, that is, 70 degrees, not cool to the touch, absolutely do not cook and eat it. Bacteria grows rapidly at room temperature, and food is to be considered questionable after two hours.

Safety also requires us to cook all meats until there is no pink showing. Cut through a sample piece of meat, and using a flashlight, visually inspect hamburgers, chicken, and pork to make sure that they are cooked through. This is particularly important when feeding children, who are even more susceptible than adults to food poisoning.

We recommend burning the used foil in the fire after you eat, which will greatly assist in your cleanup. Mr. English has done this successfully his entire camping career with no ill effects. The tinfoil burns away, leaving only a sliver of silver to pick up and dispose of when you leave your campsite.

HAMBURGER PIE

You can't season this enough. The meat flavors everything else. This is the same old recipe we did in Girl Scouts. You can't improve it.

1 pound ground beef,
ground round, or ground
chuck
Salt and pepper
1 large onion, thinly sliced
1 large baking potato, thinly
sliced, peeled or unpeeled
4 carrots, thinly sliced, each
carrot kept separate
Margarine or butter

1. Form the meat into four ½-inch-thick patties. Sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Lay each patty on a large square of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Top each with a few slices of onion and potato, and 1 sliced carrot. Top with a generous tablespoon of margarine and add more salt and pepper. Wrap tightly in the foil, rolling ends to completely seal the package. Freeze or refrigerate. Pack in coolers.

2. When ready to eat, place packages directly in coals and cook for about 15 to 20 minutes. Check to see if the meat is cooked through; rewrap and cook a little longer if necessary.

Serves 4

Each of these "pies" goes well with Rice-A-Roni, which can be cooked on a gas stovetop; or with a baked grilled potato. You might notice that we don't recommend turning wrapped foil packets. That's because the butter melts in the packets and will drip out and cause a flare-up if turned.

CHICKEN BREAST PIE

You can include or omit ingredients to suit the tastes of your campers.

- 1 boneless chicken breast
per person
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon sun-dried
tomato pesto per person
- 1 tablespoon feta cheese per
person
- 1 slice country ham per
person (available in the
meat section of your
supermarket or from the
deli; other ham varieties
won't be the same, but
it's *your* recipe!)
- 1 tablespoon margarine or
butter per person
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
per person

1. For each serving, lay a chicken breast on a large square of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Spread the tomato pesto over the chicken, top with the cheese, and wrap a slice of ham completely around the chicken and cheese. Top with the margarine and sprinkle with the oregano. Wrap tightly in the foil, rolling ends to completely seal the package. Freeze or refrigerate. Pack in coolers.

2. When ready to eat, place packages directly in coals for 15 to 18 minutes. Check to see if the chicken is cooked through; rewrap and cook a little longer if necessary.

PORK CHOP AND PINEAPPLE PIE

Pork and pineapple are so good together. Leave out the green pepper if your kids don't care for it.

- 1 boneless pork chop per person
- 1 slice red onion per person
- 1 slice green bell pepper per person
- 2 canned pineapple slices per person
- 1 tablespoon teriyaki sauce per person
- 1 tablespoon margarine or butter per person
- Salt and pepper

1. For each serving, lay a pork chop on a large square of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Top each chop with the onion, green pepper, and pineapple slices. Drizzle with the teriyaki sauce. Top with the margarine and sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Wrap tightly in the foil, rolling ends to completely seal the package. Freeze or refrigerate. Pack in coolers.

2. When ready to eat, place packages directly in coals for 15 to 20 minutes. Check to see if the pork chop is cooked through; rewrap and cook a little longer if necessary.

BLACKENED FISH

What could be tastier after a long day of hiking than fish that you've cooked outdoors? You'll probably need a portable gas stove to keep the skillet hot enough for this dish.

- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

- ½ cup (1 stick) butter
- 1 fish fillet per person (redfish, pompano, red snapper, or any fillet no more than ½ inch thick)

1. Combine the seasonings and place in a shaker bottle to take with you on the trip.

2. When ready to cook, melt the butter in an aluminum foil cake pan over the grill. Place a large cast-iron skillet over high heat and heat it until you see white ash in the bottom, about 5 to 6 minutes.

3. Dip each fillet in the melted butter, then sprinkle generously on both sides with the seasonings. Place the fillets in the hot skillet and pour 1 teaspoon of melted butter over each fillet. Cook, uncovered, over high heat until the underside looks done, about 3 minutes. Turn the fillets, top each with 1 teaspoon butter, and cook until the second side is done, about 3 minutes. Serve hot.

BAKED GRILLED POTATOES

How long these take to bake depends on the size of the potatoes and how hot the coals are.

1 large baking potato per
person
¼ cup (½ stick) butter per
person, or to taste
Salt and pepper

Wash each potato and pierce all over with a fork. Wrap each potato in heavy-duty aluminum foil. Place the potatoes directly onto hot coals and cook for about 45 minutes, turning often, using long tongs. Split the potatoes and top with butter. Pass the salt and pepper.

ZUCCHINI OR GREEN BEAN BUNDLES

These should be prepared at the campsite; you don't even need to put the vegetables in a cooler unless it's really hot. If it is, however, you'll need to keep them on ice or they will deteriorate rapidly.

1 zucchini per person,
lightly peeled and thinly
sliced, or 1 cup green
beans per person, ends
removed
1 tablespoon butter per
person
Salt and pepper

For each serving, place the zucchini or green beans on a square of heavy-duty aluminum foil and top with the butter. Sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Wrap tightly in the foil, rolling ends to completely seal the package. Place packages directly in coals for about 10 minutes for zucchini, about 15 minutes for beans.

BOB'S DUTCH-OVEN BREAD

Imagine serving this hot baked bread to hungry Scouts at the end of a long day. I suspect this would earn you some Brownie points! This is prepared over a charcoal fire. We do not recommend wood, as different woods burn at different temperatures, and you are trying to "bake" the bread at a consistent temperature. Mr. English makes a tripod with sticks and hangs his Dutch oven in the center.

1 envelope active dry yeast
2¼ cups Bisquick baking
mix
½ cup milk
Butter

1. Spray a cast-iron Dutch oven with vegetable oil cooking spray and heat over the coals.

2. Place the yeast and Bisquick in a large resealable plastic bag and shake to combine. Add the milk and knead through the bag until you have a stiff, smooth dough. Shape into a rounded loaf and place in the bottom of the Dutch oven.

3. Place the Dutch oven over about 12 coals; cover with the lid and place about 12 coals on top. Check in about 10 minutes to make sure the top and bottom of the bread are browning but not burning. Remove or add coals if necessary. Bread should cook for 25 to 30 minutes. Remove from the Dutch oven, slice the bread, and serve warm with butter.

S'MORES

No camping trip is complete without this yummy treat. Roast marshmallows on green sticks or coat hangers that you bring from home already unfolded.

FOR EACH S'MORE:

1 marshmallow
2 graham cracker squares
Half a 1½-ounce
chocolate bar

Roast the marshmallow until done to your liking. Remove and place on top of 1 graham cracker. Top with the chocolate. Place the other graham cracker on the chocolate and press together to make a "sandwich." Plan to have at least 2 per person.

DUTCH-OVEN PEACH COBBLER

*C*ampers from other sites come drifting over to see what's cooking when they smell this cinnamony peach cobbler. Sometimes, Mr. English adds fresh blueberries. Be sure to share! It's the southern thing to do!

Two 16-ounce cans sliced
peaches in heavy or light
syrup, or in fruit juice,
your choice
1 pint fresh blueberries
(optional)
½ cup Bisquick baking mix
⅓ cup sugar
Ground cinnamon

TOPPING:

2¼ cups Bisquick baking
mix
¼ cup sugar
¼ cup (½ stick) butter,
melted
½ cup milk
Cinnamon sugar (¼ cup
sugar combined with
2 teaspoons ground
cinnamon; store in an
empty spice shaker jar;
shake well before each
use)

1. Spray a Dutch oven with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. Drain 1 can of the peaches. Combine both cans of peaches, including the juice from the undrained can, the blueberries, if using, the Bisquick, sugar, and a sprinkling of cinnamon. Place this mixture into the Dutch oven.

3. To make the topping: Combine the Bisquick, sugar, butter, and milk in a resealable plastic bag. Drop bits of dough, using your fingers, on top of the peaches. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar.

4. Place the Dutch oven over about 12 coals, cover with the lid, and place about 12 coals on top. Check in about 10 minutes; if the dough is brown, there are too many coals on top. If it is not brown at all, add a few coals. The cobbler usually cooks in 30 minutes.

Serves about 10 hungry campers

TORTILLA DESSERT WRAPS

My son Bobby got a variation of this recipe from a pretty señorita friend of his, and he re-created the original recipe for my barbecue special. It's really easy; the kids can assemble them themselves. My website reviewers rate this recipe five stars!

½ cup almond paste
Four 8-inch flour tortillas
1 cup mini marshmallows
½ cup milk chocolate chips
⅓ cup coconut flakes
Canned whipped cream

1. Crumble 2 tablespoons of the almond paste evenly over each tortilla. Sprinkle one-fourth of the marshmallows, one-fourth of the chocolate chips, and one-fourth of the coconut on half of each tortilla. Roll up the tortillas, wrap each in heavy-duty aluminum foil, and seal tightly.

2. Cook in the coals for about 5 to 8 minutes, until the chocolate is melted. Remove the foil and place on a plate. Garnish with whipped cream.

Serves 4



BEASON BREAKFAST BURRITOS

After all this good food at night, who would wake up hungry, right? Well, everybody does! Carole Beason, a landscape designer in Savannah, created this recipe when camping with her husband, Fred, and sons, Ben and Thomas.

1 egg per person
1 tablespoon butter per person
Salt and pepper
1 corn or flour tortilla per person
1 tablespoon cooked, crumbled bulk sausage per person
1 tablespoon grated Monterey Jack cheese per person
Sour cream
Salsa

1. Scramble the eggs in the butter and add salt and pepper to taste.

2. Lay each tortilla on a large square of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Spoon a scoop of eggs on each tortilla. Add a tablespoon each of sausage and cheese. Wrap the tortilla around the filling and wrap tightly in the foil, rolling the ends to completely seal the package. Freeze. Place the packages in your cooler for the camping trip.

3. Cook the packages over hot coals for 5 to 6 minutes, until heated through. (The tortillas will burn on the bottom if you leave them on the grill grates too long). Serve with sour cream and salsa.

A BIG Cocktail Buffet for Out-of-Town Wedding Guests

THE MENU

STORE-BOUGHT SHAVED COUNTRY HAM

STORE-BOUGHT SHAVED SMOKED TURKEY BREAST WITH
CHUTNEY BUTTER AND STORE-BOUGHT HONEY MUSTARD

TOMATO SANDWICHES

SMOKED OR POACHED SALMON MOUSSE WITH DILL SAUCE

FRESH ASPARAGUS WITH CURRY DIP

SENSATIONAL SHRIMP MOLD

HOT SPINACH-ARTICHOKE DIP

PURIST'S LUMP CRAB SALAD

SLICE-AND-BAKE CHEESE STRAWS

BACON CRISPS

LEMON BARS

MINI CHOCOLATE ECLAIRS

CHOCOLATE-DIPPED STRAWBERRIES

After the September 11, 2001, tragedy in New York City, Simon Macfadyen, a young Englishman and a vice president of Marsh Limited in London (an insurer of airlines, including United), was sent to New York on business. He needed a getaway, and went to Washington, D.C., to see Mallory Crosland, a friend he'd met when she interned at Lloyd's of London. Through Mallory, he met Elizabeth Lientz (Barbie's daughter, of bridge club supper fame). Well, it was love at first sight, which is something my Michael and I know all about if you've been watching my show!

Anyway, Simon and Elizabeth were married in Savannah on March 27, 2004, and 130 Brits

came for the wedding, including Pat Rowan, Simon's ninety-two-year-old grandmother! There was so much good food, including an oyster roast, which the Brits loved.

When Elizabeth's Savannah high school friends—Julia Holliday, Katherine Donovan, Benjamin Levy, and Meg Butler—heard that she was engaged, their parents wanted to throw a party when all the twentysomethings would be home for the holidays. The party was at the Donovans' house in Ardsley Park, and each of the host families contributed part of the food—a great idea for giving a large party. Elizabeth requested a menu the families had traditionally served during the holidays through the years.

Here's a little secret: When you're doing the cooking for a big party, do buy some quality prepared foods to help yourself out. At Elizabeth's Christmas cocktail buffet, the hosts and hostesses bought a boneless country ham and a boneless turkey breast, and had both shaved for make-your-own sandwich platters. No need to cook the meat when someone else can do it for you! They also bought just-baked yeast rolls and lemon bars from a local bakery. If you'd like to make your own lemon bars, we've provided a terrific recipe.

The centerpieces for the cocktail party were striking amaryllis in full bloom that Katherine Donovan's mother, Carolyn, had purchased from an annual garden club sale. The bulbs were tied together and accented with giant gold bows, and fresh greenery from the yard filled the base of the flowerpots.

Ms. Donovan had this tip for anyone planning a large cocktail buffet, and it's one I agree with totally: Do splurge on having someone in the kitchen to keep trays replenished and to clean up as the evening goes on. The hosts also hired a bartender, but you could also appoint your best young drink-mixer to this task. That way, girls, you can enjoy your own party and not have to face a mess when it's over!

We've selected some of the best recipes from several parties to create this rather elaborate menu. If you don't want to tackle the whole thing, you may pick and choose from the menu to prepare your own cocktail party for out-of-town family and friends.

TO ORDER A COUNTRY HAM

Country ham shaved thin and served on homemade biscuits is a big southern treat. Some people still opt to buy the whole bone-in ham, scrub off the mold that always comes with it, soak it, and bake it (see Jane and Gilbert Wells's "Run for the Roses" party, page 159, for details). Others are happy to have other people do the work. One very good source for purchasing country ham is www.smithfieldfarms.com; or call (800) 222-2110. Expect to pay about \$70 for a 7- to 9-pound ham. Have it shaved by a friendly butcher.

CHUTNEY BUTTER

Place this in a small crock near the shaved turkey. Do not buy "hot" chutney.

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter,
softened
- 1 tablespoon cranberry
chutney, any brand

Combine the butter and chutney in a small bowl, stirring well with a spoon. Taste; add more chutney if desired. Store in the refrigerator until ready to serve. Serve in crocks; allow to stand about 30 minutes at room temperature to soften before serving.

TOMATO SANDWICHES

There is almost nothing a southerner likes better than a tomato sandwich. You'd think these were easy, and cheap, but they're neither! Good tomatoes cost an arm and a leg, and you need a whole loaf of bread for just ten sandwiches. There is an art to a perfect tomato sandwich: vine-ripened tomatoes that have been peeled and sliced and drained overnight on paper towels; day-old white bread (your store brand is fine!); and mayonnaise seasoned with seasoned salt. If you don't have ripe tomatoes, don't serve these!

This recipe makes ten large sandwiches, which serves five guests. Make as many as you need for your party. The bread will go farther if the tomatoes are smaller, like Romas, as you can get two rounds out of one slice of bread.

- 2 vine-ripe or Roma
tomatoes, peeled and
sliced into about 5 slices
- 1 loaf day-old thin-sliced
white bread
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon seasoned salt

1. Place the tomato slices on cookie sheets lined with paper towels. Allow to drain for several hours or overnight in the refrigerator.

2. Cut bread rounds with a biscuit cutter the size of the largest tomato slices. Stir together the mayonnaise and seasoned salt.

3. An hour before serving, slather some mayonnaise on a bread round, top with a tomato slice, and cover with another bread round, also slathered with seasoned mayonnaise.

SMOKED OR POACHED SALMON MOUSSE WITH DILL SAUCE

Let's use our heads, girls. Buy the dad-gum poached salmon. It's the sauce that's so terrific!

- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon grated onion
- 2 drops hot sauce
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups poached or smoked salmon, flaked into small pieces (You'll have a totally different taste depending on which one you choose; I like 'em both.)
- 2 tablespoons capers, drained
- 1 cup whipping cream, whipped
- 1 lemon, sliced paper thin, each slice cut into 2 half moons
- 1 bunch parsley or watercress, washed and dried

1. Grease a 4-cup fish mold with butter or mayonnaise. Soften the gelatin in ¼ cup cold water. Add ½ cup boiling water and stir well, until the gelatin has completely dissolved. Add the mayonnaise, lemon juice, lime juice, onion, hot sauce, paprika, and salt and mix well. Stir in the salmon and capers and mix well. Fold in the whipped cream and continue folding until everything is well combined. Pour the mixture into the prepared mold. Cover with plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours or overnight.

2. When ready to serve, unmold onto a large plate. Take lemon slices and create a "tail" on the back of the fish. Surround with parsley or watercress. Serve with the dill sauce.

3. To make the dill sauce: Combine all of the ingredients in a medium bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for at least an hour to allow the flavors to blend. Serve next to the salmon mousse in a glass bowl with a serving spoon.

Serves 16 to 20 as part of a buffet

DILL SAUCE:

- 1 English cucumber, peeled, grated, and drained for at least 1 hour
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 small clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ⅔ cup fresh dill, finely chopped

FRESH ASPARAGUS

I don't steam asparagus; I boil them quickly. Just don't get distracted while the asparagus are cooking, or you'll wind up with limp spears. Allow one or two asparagus per person. Use Martha's recipe from the Cooking Shower, page 34. I love asparagus with curry dip, like this recipe from Sarah Gaede, who used to cater in Savannah before she moved away and became an Episcopal priest!

CURRY DIP

A little of this goes a long way; one recipe is usually enough, unless you've got a huge party. Then you can double the recipe.

1 cup mayonnaise
1 teaspoon curry powder
½ tablespoon fresh lemon
juice
1 tablespoon grated onion
1 red bell pepper

1. Combine the mayonnaise, curry powder, lemon juice, and onion in a small bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and chill.

2. Cut the bell pepper in half lengthwise, remove the core and seeds, and serve the curry dip in pepper "bowls."

Serves 15 to 18

SENSATIONAL SHRIMP MOLD

People on the coast make something called shrimp butter, which is nothing but ground-up shrimp held together with butter, with a little sherry for zap. This is one notch up from that, because in place of butter, it's got one of my other favorite ingredients—cream cheese!

- 1 pound small or medium shrimp
- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 green onion, finely chopped, white and green parts
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- Dash of hot sauce, favorite brand

1. Bring 2 cups water and 1 teaspoon salt to a boil in a medium saucepan and add the shrimp. When the water returns to a boil, turn off the heat, cover the pot, and allow the shrimp to sit for 5 minutes. Drain, peel, and devein.

2. Place the shrimp in a food processor and pulse about eight to ten times, until they are finely chopped but not mushy. Mix together the cream cheese, mayonnaise, green onion, mustard, and hot sauce in a small glass bowl, until well combined. Stir in the shrimp.

3. Line a 2-cup mold or glass bowl with plastic wrap, leaving lots of overhang. Place the shrimp mixture into the mold, packing tightly with a spatula. Cover with the plastic wrap overhang and chill in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours or overnight.

4. When ready to serve, unwrap the overhang and invert the mold onto a plate. Remove the plastic wrap. Allow to come to room temperature before serving with water crackers or other favorite snack cracker.

Serves 12 to 15 as part of a buffet

HOT SPINACH-ARTICHOKE DIP

This is the only thing that needs to go in a chafing dish. Use it to anchor one end of the dining-room table, because it will draw a crowd. Make sure the heat under the chafing dish is set very low so the dip doesn't scorch. Nobody can ever quite figure out what's in this, but they like it, and that's all that matters.

One 10-ounce package
frozen chopped spinach,
cooked in the microwave
for 5 minutes and
squeezed until dry

Two 13¾-ounce cans
artichoke hearts, drained
and chopped in a food
processor (about five or
six pulses)

½ cup mayonnaise

½ cup sour cream

1½ cups freshly grated
Parmesan cheese

1 cup grated pepper Jack
cheese

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 2-quart
casserole dish.

2. Combine all of the ingredients in a large bowl.
Stir well with a metal spoon. Place in the prepared
casserole dish and bake for 30 minutes. Transfer to a
chafing dish. Keep warm over a low flame. Serve with
bagel chips.

Serves 16 to 20 as part of a buffet

PURIST'S LUMP CRAB SALAD

Some of you won't be able to make this because you can't get lump crabmeat like we can. This is the ultimate luxury dish, even for those of us who live on the Georgia coast.

For the best flavor, make this at the last minute.

1 pound jumbo or regular

lump crabmeat

Grated zest of 2 lemons

Seasoned salt

Juice of 2 lemons

About 1 tablespoon

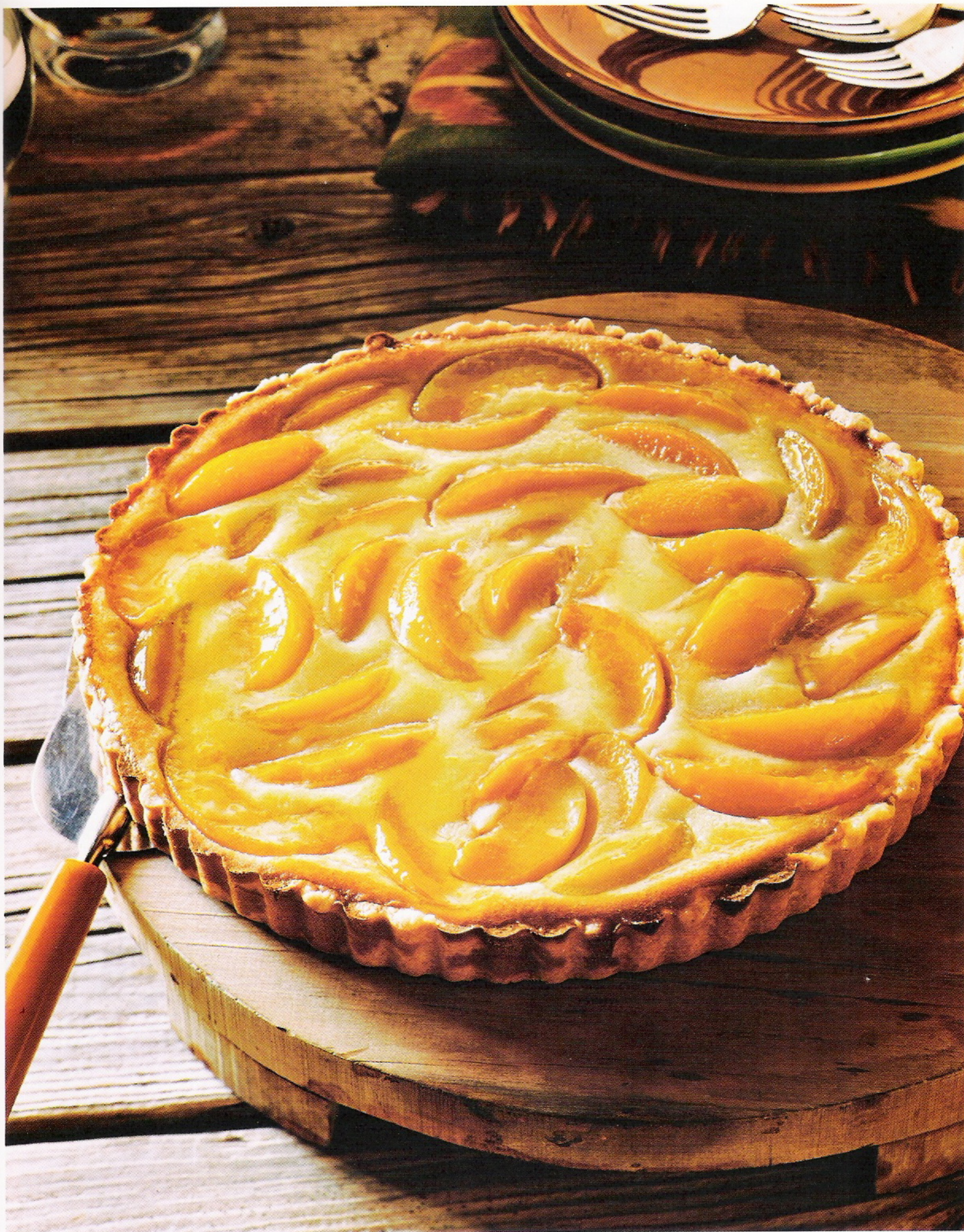
mayonnaise (just enough
to hold it all together)

Just before serving, combine all of the ingredients, adding seasoned salt to taste; stir gently so as not to break up the crabmeat. Serve with water crackers or toast points.

Serves 10 to 12 as part of a buffet



Potato Soup with Shrimp (page 23); Green Chili Corn Muffins (page 27)



Peach Cream Tart (page 125)



Buttermilk Pound Cake with Strawberries and Whipped Cream (pages 12–13)



Beer-in-the-Rear Chicken (page 7)



Raspberry and Sherry Trifle (page 72)



Wild Rice Salad (page 106); Rene's Coleslaw (page 107); Bert's Southern Fried Chicken (pages 104–5)



Shrimp and Grits (page 31)



*Clockwise, from right: Fruit Kebabs (page 84); Almond Danish Swirls (page 83);
Sausage Swirls (page 82); Breakfast Casserole (page 81)*



Bacon-Wrapped Grilled Corn on the Cob (page 8); Green Beans with New Potatoes (page 9)

SLICE-AND-BAKE CHEESE STRAWS

Many a Southern cook's reputation has been founded on cheese straws. These aren't made with a cookie press. Just roll the dough into a log using waxed paper, refrigerate, and slice as you would refrigerator cookies.

½ cup (1 stick) butter,
softened
1 pound grated sharp
Cheddar cheese
1½ cups all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper

1. Combine the butter and cheese in a food processor. Sift together the flour, baking powder, salt, and cayenne and add to the food processor bowl. Pulse until the dough forms a ball. Turn out onto waxed paper and roll into small logs. (I make several small ones for ease of handling.) Wrap each log in the waxed paper and twist the ends to keep airtight. Refrigerate until firm enough to slice.

2. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper or nonstick baking mats, or use nonstick sheets.

3. Cut the dough into ¼-inch slices and place ½ inch apart on the prepared cookie sheets. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until lightly browned. Cool completely before placing into airtight tins. Dough may be placed into resealable plastic freezer bags and frozen. Baked cheese straws may be frozen in tins. To reheat, place frozen cheese straws in a 300°F oven for 5 minutes.

Makes 8 dozen

BACON CRISPS

*B*arbie's sister made a tin full of these. They were gobbled up by Americans and Brits alike.

These can be frozen after they're cooked. Place the frozen crisps on a baking sheet and reheat them for 5 minutes in a 350°F oven.

½ cup freshly grated

Parmesan cheese

1 pound sliced bacon, cut in half

1 sleeve Waverly Wafers or other buttery rectangular cracker

1. Preheat the oven to 250°F

2. Place 1 teaspoon of the cheese on each cracker and wrap tightly with a strip of bacon (no toothpick required!). Place the wrapped crackers on a broiler rack on a baking sheet and put the baking sheet on the oven rack; bake for 2 hours, or until the bacon is done. Do not turn. Drain on paper towels. Serve hot or at room temperature.

Makes 3 dozen

NOTE: We were a little impatient during our testing and baked these at 350°F for about 40 minutes, with good results.

LEMON BARS

Tart lemon bars on a shortbread crust look pretty and are a real crowd-pleaser.

CRUST:

1 cup (2 sticks) butter,
melted
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup confectioners' sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt

FILLING:

6 eggs
3 cups granulated sugar
3 tablespoons grated lemon
zest
1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
1 cup all-purpose flour

Additional confectioners'
sugar for dusting

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 9-by-13-inch pan with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. To make the crust: Combine the butter, flour, confectioners' sugar, and salt in a glass bowl. Mix with spoon or fingers until well combined. Shape into a ball and pat into the prepared pan. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, until set and just beginning to turn color.

3. To make the filling: While the crust is baking, using an electric mixer at medium speed, beat together the eggs, granulated sugar, lemon zest, lemon juice, and flour. Pour over the baked crust and bake for an additional 30 to 35 minutes, until golden brown. Let cool completely, then sift confectioners' sugar over the top. Cut, then cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until serving.

Makes 24 large or 48 small bars

MINI CHOCOLATE ECLAIRS

I made these on my "House Tour" episode. They look beautiful on a silver tray, and can be frozen in an airtight container until party time.

PASTRY:

½ cup (1 stick) margarine
or butter
1 cup sifted all-purpose
flour
4 eggs

FILLING:

3 cups whole milk
¾ cup sugar
½ teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons flour
3 eggs, lightly beaten
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

ICING:

2 squares (2 ounces)
unsweetened chocolate
2 cups sugar
1 cup whipping cream

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Grease a cookie sheet or line with parchment paper.

2. To make the pastry: Bring 1 cup water and the margarine to a boil. Add the flour and stir constantly until the mixture is smooth and forms a ball. Remove from the heat and let cool. Beat in the eggs, one at a time. Drop the dough by teaspoonfuls onto the prepared cookie sheet. Bake for approximately 30 minutes, or until light brown. Set aside on a rack to cool.

3. To make the filling: Combine the milk, sugar, salt, and flour in a medium saucepan; cook slowly until mixture thickens, stirring constantly. Add the eggs and cook, stirring, until the mixture is even thicker, about the consistency of mayonnaise. Remove from the heat, let cool, and add the vanilla.

4. With a serrated knife, slice the pastry puffs lengthwise but not all the way through. Pipe the custard into the center.

5. To make the icing: Melt the chocolate in the microwave at full power for 30 seconds; place in a medium saucepan and stir, then add the sugar and cream. Cook over medium heat until soft ball stage, 240°F on a candy thermometer. Let cool and beat until smooth. Ice the tops of the éclairs.

Makes 24 medium or 60 mini éclairs

CHOCOLATE-DIPPED STRAWBERRIES

Strawberries dipped in chocolate . . . yum-my. You can also make a Cream Cheese Pound Cake (page 71) and cut it into cubes for dipping. The sauce will taste different depending on the type of liqueur you use: a coffee-flavored liqueur gives you a mocha sauce; try an orange or raspberry liqueur, or even dark rum.

One 12-ounce package
semisweet chocolate chips

One 14-ounce can
sweetened condensed
milk

1 teaspoon vanilla extract
or liqueur (optional)

2 pints strawberries, washed
but left unstemmed

1. Place the chocolate chips and milk in a 3-cup glass dish. Microwave on high for 1 minute and stir. If not completely melted, microwave for 15 seconds more; stir. Repeat if necessary. When completely melted, stir in the sweetened condensed milk or vanilla extract or liqueur, if using.

2. When ready to serve, reheat in the microwave over low power until warm. Place in a fondue pot over a very low flame and surround with strawberries and pound cake, if using. Have someone stir the pot as needed to keep the sauce from scorching.

Makes about 2 cups

A Christening Brunch

THE MENU

PRALINE FRENCH TOAST CASSEROLE

BAKED GARLIC CHEESE GRITS

BROILED PARMESAN TOMATOES

MUSHROOM AND SAUSAGE QUICHE

SPINACH AND BACON QUICHE

SAUSAGE BALLS

WATERMELON FRUIT BASKET WITH GINGER-POPPY SEED DRESSING

ANIMAL-SHAPED SUGAR COOKIES

If there is anything southerners enjoy, it's a christening or baptism, followed by a brunch for family and special friends. Whether the event takes place in a small church or a large cathedral, there is nothing any sweeter than a baby in a christening gown. Of course, no telling how long it has taken the frazzled mom and dad to get the little one dressed and ready for the big day! Although you can always go to a club for a brunch, it's much nicer to do this at home, and if you're organized and have a simple make-ahead meal, I just know you can do it!

It's important to think about who is coming to the party, as you are likely to have children running around as well as grandparents who need a quieter setting. So perhaps you could set up an "adult" area, and have some smaller tables set outside with a teenage babysitter for the children.

Much of this menu comes from Katie Borges, who is in charge of menus and meal preparation at the Isle of Hope United Methodist Church, in Savannah. Church members often call upon Katie to prepare the food for their baby's baptismal day. There's no perfect menu, she says. Some people want egg casseroles, others want quiches, and still others want cold salads—chicken, pasta, green, and fruit. (Katie chose a salad lunch after the baptism of her son, Jonathan.) Whatever you choose, Katie recommends that it be a substantial meal. Remember, it's been a long morning!

PRALINE FRENCH TOAST CASSEROLE

Everyone will love this! It's very rich, so it goes a long way.

8 eggs
1½ cups half-and-half
⅓ cup maple syrup
⅓ cup packed light brown sugar
10 to 12 slices soft bread,
1 inch thick

TOPPING:

½ cup (1 stick) butter
½ cup packed light brown sugar
⅔ cup maple syrup
2 cups chopped pecans

1. Generously butter a 13-by-9-inch casserole dish.
2. Mix the eggs, half-and-half, maple syrup, and sugar in a large bowl. Place the bread slices in the prepared casserole dish and cover with the egg mixture. Cover with plastic wrap and let soak overnight in the refrigerator.
3. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Remove the casserole from the refrigerator.
4. Make the topping: Melt the butter in a saucepan. Add the sugar and maple syrup and cook for 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in the pecans. Pour the mixture over the bread and bake for 45 to 55 minutes. Allow to sit for 10 minutes before serving.

Serves 8

BAKED GARLIC CHEESE GRITS

A *Southern favorite. This goes well with seafood, too.*

6 cups chicken broth
(canned is fine)
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
2 cups regular grits
Three 6-ounce rolls Kraft
cheese food with garlic,
or any garlic-cheddar
spread, cut up
½ cup milk
4 eggs, beaten
½ cup (1 stick) butter
1 cup grated sharp Cheddar
cheese

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 4-quart casserole dish.

2. Bring the broth, salt, and pepper to a boil in a 2-quart saucepan. Stir in the grits and whisk until completely combined. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until the grits are thick, about 8 minutes. Add the garlic cheese and milk and stir. Gradually stir in the eggs and butter, stirring until all are combined. Pour the mixture into the prepared casserole dish. Sprinkle with the Cheddar cheese and bake for 45 minutes, or until set.

Serves 12

BROILED PARMESAN TOMATOES

A *recipe like this, which is quick and easy and delicious, makes it easy on the hostesses. Tomatoes always taste so good with brunch food.*

Tomatoes are canned by weight, which means that one 14½-ounce can might have eight small tomatoes in it, and the next one might have six. Count on each can having six tomatoes; better to have leftovers! Each guest would have one tomato.

Three 14½-ounce cans
whole tomatoes, drained,
any variety, including
Italian plum
Salt and pepper
½ cup (1 stick) butter
1½ cups freshly grated
Parmesan cheese

Place the tomatoes in a 13-by-9-inch casserole dish. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste and top each with a pat of butter. Generously sprinkle the cheese over the tomatoes and broil for 10 to 15 minutes, until the tomatoes are heated through and the cheese is bubbly.

Serves 16

MUSHROOM AND SAUSAGE QUICHE

This makes a huge, rich quiche. Leave out the sausage and you have a basic mushroom quiche.

One 9-inch refrigerated
piecrust, fitted into a
9-inch glass pie plate
One 1-pound package
ground sausage
1 tablespoon butter
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pound fresh mushrooms,
sliced
 $\frac{1}{2}$ large Vidalia onion,
chopped
4 eggs
1 cup sour cream
1 cup cottage cheese,
2% or 4% milkfat
3 tablespoons all-purpose
flour
3 tablespoons freshly grated
Parmesan cheese
1 teaspoon hot sauce
One 8-ounce package
shredded sharp Cheddar
cheese

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Crimp the edges of the crust.

2. In a large skillet, cook and drain the sausage, and set aside. Wipe out the pan, and in the same pan, melt the butter over medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms and onion, and sauté for 5 minutes, or until tender.

3. Place the eggs, sour cream, cottage cheese, flour, Parmesan cheese, and hot sauce in a food processor and process until smooth, stopping to scrape down the sides of the bowl.

4. Stir together the crumbled sausage, mushroom mixture, egg mixture, and Cheddar cheese, and spoon into the piecrust. Cover the edges of the piecrust with aluminum foil to prevent the crust from burning.

5. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes, until golden brown and the center is set. Cool for 10 minutes and cut into 8 wedges.

Serves 8

SPINACH AND BACON QUICHE

6 eggs, beaten
1½ cups milk
Salt and pepper
2 cups chopped fresh baby spinach, packed
1 pound cooked bacon, crumbled
1½ cups shredded Swiss cheese
One 9-inch refrigerated piecrust, fitted into a 9-inch glass pie plate

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F
2. Combine the eggs, milk, and salt and pepper to taste in a food processor or blender. Layer the spinach, bacon, and cheese in the bottom of the piecrust, then pour the egg mixture on top.
3. Bake for 35 to 45 minutes, until the egg mixture is set. Cut into 8 wedges.

Serves 8

SAUSAGE BALLS

Put these out in a pretty basket and let the kids grab one or two while they are waiting on the real meal!

One 1-pound package ground sausage
3 cups Bisquick baking mix
4 cups grated sharp Cheddar cheese
½ teaspoon pepper, or more if desired

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Spray a 15-by-10-by-1-inch baking sheet with vegetable oil cooking spray.
2. Combine all of the ingredients in a large glass bowl; mix well with your fingers. The mixture will be very crumbly. Form into 1-inch balls, squeezing the mixture so it holds together, then rolling it between the palms of your hands to form balls. Then place the balls on the prepared baking sheet.
3. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes, until golden brown. To prevent sticking, move the sausage balls with a spatula halfway through cooking. Cool, then remove from the cookie sheet.

Makes 5 dozen

WATERMELON FRUIT BASKET

This can be the centerpiece on your table.

- 1 large seedless watermelon,
about 12 pounds
- 1 cantaloupe
- 1 honeydew
- 1 pint strawberries, hulled
- 2 cups seedless red grapes
- 2 cups seedless green grapes
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup fresh lime juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. To carve the watermelon, lay a towel underneath it to keep it from rolling. With a water-soluble marker, draw an outline of a basket onto the melon, using a zigzag pattern. Leave a "handle" about 1¼ inches wide across the top. Using a large sharp knife, cut along the marker line. With a melon baller, cut the watermelon into balls and place in a large glass bowl. Refrigerate the melon basket.

2. Make melon balls with both the cantaloupe and honeydew. Add to the watermelon in the bowl. Add the strawberries and grapes.

4. Combine the sugar, lime juice, and vanilla. Pour over the fruit and toss to coat. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator until ready to serve. Just before serving, transfer the fruit to the watermelon basket.

Serves 18

GINGER-POPPY SEED FRUIT DRESSING

Serve this in a small bowl next to the fruit for dipping.

- ½ cup whipping cream
- One 6-ounce can frozen
orange juice concentrate,
thawed
- 1 teaspoon poppy seeds
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger

Place all of the ingredients in a jar with a tight-fitting lid and shake well. Pour into a serving bowl and use as a dipping sauce for fruit.

Makes 1½ cups of dressing

ANIMAL-SHAPED SUGAR COOKIES

Just think of all the times you could make sugar cookies and change the shapes to match the occasion! I used to like mine thin and crisp, but after tasting a nice, thick sugar cookie made commercially, I've started worrying less about how thin I roll the dough. Put these in a cute basket for the kids. Grown-ups like them, too.

1 cup (2 sticks) butter at
room temperature
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon almond extract
 $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups sifted all-purpose
flour, plus more for
dusting work surface
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

ICING:

$1\frac{1}{2}$ cups confectioners' sugar
1 tablespoon milk
Food coloring

1. Using an electric mixer at medium speed, cream the butter and sugar. Beat in the egg and vanilla. In a separate bowl, combine the flour and salt, then stir into the butter mixture with a wooden spoon. Cover the dough with plastic wrap and chill for 30 minutes.

2. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a cookie sheet, or line with parchment paper or a nonstick baking mat.

3. On a floured board, roll out the dough to a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thickness and cut into animal shapes with floured cookie cutters. Place the cookies on the prepared cookie sheet and bake for 8 to 9 minutes, until the edges are just beginning to brown. Transfer the cookies to a wire rack to cool while you make the icing.

4. To make the icing: Sift the sugar into a small glass bowl, add the milk, and stir. If the icing is too stiff to handle, add a teaspoon more milk. When the icing is smooth, divide into thirds. Tint each bowl of icing a different pastel with a drop of blue, green, or yellow food coloring. Spread onto the cooled cookies. The icing will set up when completely dry. Store the cookies in an airtight container until ready to serve.

*Makes about 18 cookies,
depending on the size of the cookie cutters*

Run for the Roses

THE MENU

GILBERT'S MINT JULEPS

BEER CHEESE

KENTUCKY COUNTRY HAM AND SOUTHERN BISCUITS

STORE-BOUGHT FRIED CHICKEN

BENEDICTINE SANDWICHES

TOMATO ASPIC WITH COTTAGE CHEESE DIP

KENTUCKY SPOON BREAD

TASSIE CUPS WITH LEMON CURD FILLING

CHOCOLATE CHIP PIE

Imagine having a party so memorable, people still talk about it twenty-five years later! That's precisely the situation Jane and Gilbert Wells, who have a successful bath and kitchen design business in Savannah, find themselves in. Jane and Gilbert, both native Kentuckians, had a Derby Day party in Savannah back in 1980, and people today are still asking Jane when she's having another. "It's the funniest thing," Jane remarks. "They think they've been dropped from the list. They are so relieved when they discover that we've been too busy to do another Derby party, and they always remind me not to forget them if I plan one."

Fans who watch the races from home plan an event centered around mint juleps (the classic Derby drink made with fresh mint, good Kentucky bourbon, and sugar syrup, and traditionally served ice cold in a silver julep cup), the television set, and good food, including what Jane considers Kentucky's finest delicacy: fresh-off-the-farm salt-cured country ham, complete with a moldy exterior. "I like to buy them directly from the farmers," Jane says. "If I were doing a Derby party, I'd call Gilbert's brother in Kentucky and have him send us one." (You can order a salt-cured ham from Smithfield Farms; see page 138 for ordering information.)

You don't have to be from Kentucky or serve a country ham to have a bona fide Derby party,

however. Sue and Lou Off, of Tybee Island, Georgia, invited friends in for mint juleps (of course); cheese straws; pimiento cheese spread; marinated shrimp; beef tenderloin; a salad of green beans, walnuts, and feta cheese; and chocolate bread pudding with bourbon sauce. The supplies, including the mint julep cups, were ordered from www.atasteofkentucky.com. When guests arrived, they picked the name of a Kentucky Derby winner out of a hat, and found the matching place card. Everyone wore hats, and the guests played Derby trivia, with the male winner receiving a bottle of Kentucky bourbon and the female a flower centerpiece.

Jane agreed to go through her files to resurrect the recipes for her famous party, including the treasured recipe for how to cook a country ham that is in Gilbert's mother's handwriting, and other favorites culled from a collection of Kentucky cookbooks dating back to 1959. In addition to her made-from-scratch meal ("I just have to do everything from scratch; I drive my family crazy"), Jane served Kentucky Fried Chicken. "Colonel Sanders really did exist, and I met him," Jane explains.

Should Jane and Gilbert have another Derby party (they promise they will soon, folks!), they have 120 mint julep glasses from Churchill Downs, a box from each year of the race since 1963. Now, that's planning ahead! If Jane was serving twenty people, she'd definitely use her sterling silver julep cups.

GILBERT'S MINT JULEPS

Gilbert learned to make these in his hometown of Glasgow, Kentucky. He served these in California when he and Jane lived there, and continues the tradition in Savannah. Get a good start, as the syrup needs to be made a week in advance and will keep up to thirty days. Be careful! Juleps are delicious and smooth; the alcohol sneaks up on you!

3 cups sugar
Leaves from 15 to 20 mint
sprigs
Kentucky bourbon
Fresh mint sprigs, for
garnish

1. Place 4 cups water and the sugar in a heavy saucepan and stir. Add the mint leaves and bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer for 10 minutes. Let cool. Put the sugar syrup into a jug and refrigerate for at least a week and up to 30 days to let the flavor fully develop.

2. When ready to serve, pour 1½ ounces of the cold syrup and 3 ounces of bourbon over crushed ice in a julep cup. Stir. Add a sprig of fresh mint and serve with short straws.

Makes enough syrup for 25 drinks

BEER CHEESE

Jane says something cheesy is a requirement at a Derby party. Cheese straws, store-bought or homemade, are also an option.

1 pound grated sharp
Cheddar cheese
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon salt
1 clove garlic, minced
¼ small onion, grated
2 tablespoons flat beer

Place the cheese, cayenne, salt, garlic, onion, and beer in a food processor and process until smooth. Pack the cheese into crocks or serving bowls. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate. Allow to come to room temperature before serving with water crackers or crisp celery stalks.

Makes about 2 cups, enough for a party of about 25

KENTUCKY COUNTRY HAM

*J*ane and Gilbert would never think of ordering a country ham over the Internet! They prefer to go to Kentucky themselves and buy a ham straight out of a farmer's barn. And they want the real thing—a ham that's been hanging from the barn roof for two years! The second-best scenario would be to call Gilbert's brother and have him buy the country ham from a farmer and send it. Preparing a country ham starts with taking it outside to wash the mold off with water and a stiff brush—no kidding! If that doesn't appeal to you, check out page 138 for a number where you can order a smaller, boneless country ham.

1 country ham (25 to
30 pounds)
4 cups cider vinegar
4 cups packed brown sugar

1. Take the ham outside and clean the skin under cold running water with a stiff brush. Soak the ham overnight in a large roasting pan in water to cover plus the vinegar.

2. Preheat the oven to 300°F. Remove the ham from the liquid and drain, reserving 4 cups of the soaking liquid. Return the ham to the pan fat side down. Mix 2 cups of the sugar with the reserved soaking liquid and pour over the ham. Bake, covered, for 15 minutes per pound, about 6 hours. Let cool in its liquid.

3. When cool, drain the cooking liquid. Skin the ham and score the top with a sharp knife. Pack the remaining 2 cups sugar over the top of the ham. Bake, uncovered, for 1 hour. Let cool.

4. When cool, slice wafer thin. Or take to a butcher and pay to have it shaved!

Makes enough for 80 sandwiches

SOUTHERN BISCUITS

Jane got this basic biscuit recipe from an old cookbook. She bakes the biscuits well in advance and freezes them.

2 cups all-purpose flour,
plus more for dusting
work surface
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon sugar
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup vegetable shortening
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup whole milk

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F. Spray a cookie sheet with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. Place the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar in a food processor. Pulse four times to combine the dry ingredients. Add the shortening and process until the shortening is completely incorporated. Add $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of the milk and pulse four times. Add 1 tablespoon more milk and pulse four times. If the dough holds together, stop adding milk. If you need more, add a little more.

3. When the dough holds together, turn it out onto a floured board. Roll or pat out about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Cut out biscuits with a $1\frac{1}{2}$ - or 2-inch cutter. Place the biscuits on the prepared cookie sheet and bake for 8 minutes. Let cool on wire racks. Freeze on cookie sheets. When frozen, place in resealable plastic bags.

4. When ready to serve, preheat the oven to 375°F. Remove the biscuits from the freezer and place on cookie sheets. Allow to thaw at room temperature. Bake for about 5 minutes. Let cool. Serve with country ham.

Makes about 30 small biscuits

BENEDICTINE SANDWICHES

This may be Jane's favorite thing at a Derby party. It is a glorified cucumber sandwich, but so beautiful because of the drop of food coloring. The number of slices of bread you will need will depend on the size of the cutter you use. Use a good commercial loaf, like Arnold or Pepperidge Farm.

1 medium cucumber
1 small onion, quartered
One 8-ounce package
cream cheese, softened
½ teaspoon salt
Dash of Tabasco
1 drop green food coloring
Mayonnaise
Thin-sliced white bread
Parsley or watercress for
garnish

1. Peel the cucumber and slice in half lengthwise; remove the seeds with a small spoon. Place the cucumber in a food processor and pulse about five times, until the cucumber is minced. Do not drain. Place the cucumber and liquid into a small glass mixing bowl.

2. Place the onion in the food processor, pulsing until it is finely chopped. Add the onion and liquid to the cucumber. Add the cream cheese and stir well with a spatula. Add the salt, Tabasco, and food coloring.

3. With a round cookie or biscuit cutter, cut rounds out of the bread slices. Spread a small amount of mayonnaise on the bread rounds. Spread the cheese mixture on half the rounds and top with another round. Garnish with a sprig of parsley or watercress.

Makes enough filling for 25 sandwiches

TOMATO ASPIC WITH COTTAGE CHEESE DIP

At her next party, Jane intends to serve the tomato aspic in a horseshoe-shaped mold from The Wilton Store (www.wilton.com). She likes to fill the center of the aspic with a savory cottage cheese dip.

ASPIC:

- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin
- 1³/₄ cups V8 vegetable juice
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon prepared horseradish
- 2 teaspoons salt
- Dash of Tabasco
- ¹/₄ teaspoon sugar

COTTAGE CHEESE DIP:

- 1 pound large-curd cottage cheese, 2% or 4% milkfat
- 1 cup grated sharp Cheddar cheese
- ¹/₂ cup chopped Spanish olives
- 1 tablespoon grated onion
- ¹/₂ teaspoon salt
- Dash of Worcestershire sauce
- Dash of Tabasco
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise

1. To make the aspic: Soften the gelatin in ¹/₄ cup cold water. Place the V8 juice in a 4-cup glass measuring cup and heat in the microwave for 2 minutes, until very hot. Add the softened gelatin to the hot juice and stir with a metal spoon until the gelatin is completely dissolved. Add the lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, horseradish, salt, Tabasco, and sugar and stir well. Pour into a 2¹/₂-cup ring mold (sprayed with vegetable spray) and chill until set. Unmold by inverting onto a serving platter and allowing to sit for about 30 minutes; or dip the mold into warm but not hot water for 10 to 15 seconds, then insert carefully onto a serving platter. Serve a small sliver of aspic with a dollop of cottage cheese dip.

2. To make the dip: Combine the cottage cheese, Cheddar cheese, olives, onion, salt, Worcestershire sauce, Tabasco, and mayonnaise. Stir together gently but thoroughly. When ready to serve, mound into the center of the aspic. It also makes a good sandwich spread!

Serves 25

KENTUCKY SPOON BREAD

*G*rits are fine at a Derby party, but Jane thought spoon bread was more authentic. Spoon bread should be crusty and brown around the edges, and creamy in the center. This recipe goes a long way, as guests generally take just a tablespoonful.

3 cups whole milk
1¼ cups white cornmeal
2 tablespoons butter, melted
3 eggs, well beaten
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt

1. Bring the milk to a boil in a medium saucepan. Add the cornmeal and stir rapidly with a whisk until smooth. Reduce the heat to very low and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, for 3 to 5 minutes, until the mixture becomes very thick. Remove from the heat and let cool.

2. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Grease a 2-quart casserole dish.

3. Place the cooled mixture in a large mixing bowl; add the butter, eggs, baking powder, and salt. Mix with an electric mixer until combined and free from lumps, about 5 minutes. Pour into the prepared casserole dish and bake for 30 minutes. Serve hot with plenty of butter on the side.

Serves 12

TASSIE CUPS WITH LEMON CURD FILLING

TASSIE CUPS

You can make dozens of these and freeze them in plastic bags. Defrost and recrisp for 5 minutes in a 350°F oven before filling.

One 3-ounce package cream
cheese, softened
½ cup (1 stick) butter or
margarine, softened
1 cup all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon salt

1. Place all of the ingredients in a food processor and pulse until the mixture forms a ball. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill until firm, about 1 hour.
2. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Form the pastry into 24 small balls; press with fingers into the bottom and up the sides of ungreased miniature muffin tins.
3. Bake for 20 minutes, until lightly browned.

Makes 24 cups

LEMON CURD

This is delicious on toast, and to die for on toasted pound cake. Don't fill the tassie cups until just before the party, so they won't get soggy.

3 large lemons
1 cup sugar
4 eggs
½ cup (1 stick) butter,
melted

1. Grate the zest from the lemons, then juice the lemons. Place the zest and sugar in a food processor and process until combined. Add the lemon juice and eggs and process until smooth. Slowly add the butter to the mixture, pulsing as you go.
2. Place the mixture in the top of a double boiler and cook over simmering water for about 5 minutes, until thick. The lemon curd will keep in a jar in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks.

Makes enough filling for 24 tassie cups

CHOCOLATE CHIP PIE

1 cup sugar
½ cup self-rising flour
½ cup (1 stick) butter,
melted and cooled
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup pecan pieces
1½ cups (9 ounces)
semisweet chocolate chips

One 9-inch refrigerated
piecrust, fitted into a
9-inch glass pie plate
(Jane would never use a
frozen or refrigerated
piecrust!)

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F.

2. Place the sugar, flour, butter, eggs, pecans, and chocolate chips in a medium bowl. Stir with a spatula until thoroughly combined. Pour into the piecrust. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes, until the filling is puffed and set. Let cool, then chill in the refrigerator. Allow to come to room temperature before serving. Cut into slivers to serve.

Serves 10

A Week at the Lake with the Kids

THE MENU

ALL-PURPOSE CHEESE SPREAD

BLT APPETIZER

SHRIMP AND SCALLOP LASAGNA

PATTY'S SHRIMP CREOLE

CUBAN SANDWICHES

TOMATO PIE

TACO SALAD

ALICE JO'S SPAGHETTI SAUCE

PUMPKIN BARS

There is nothing quite like an extended family vacation. You know, not just an "extended" vacation, but one with all the extended family—aunts and uncles and cousins and grandparents! So many of our girlfriends are lucky to have families who have vacationed together for twenty-five years or more, with the number of "guests" ranging from thirteen to thirty and the settings anywhere from the hot sand of a beach to the cool porches of a mountain retreat. We know the old saying about family and fish—don't keep either longer than three days, 'cause they both start to stink. But these families disagree. They claim that some of the best times of their lives have occurred while vacationing together—fishing, crabbing, playing horseshoes, volleyball, cards, Pictionary, Clue, or poker! Food plays a big part in those memories, of course.

When it comes to cooking for a crowd, which is something I know all about, I can tell you one thing: Do as much of the cooking as you can before the vacation or it's no vacation! Nobody wants to be stuck in a kitchen cooking for thirty people if she can help it! Almost everyone has a favorite casserole that can be doubled or tripled and frozen. I do like to serve fresh vegetables—green beans, pole beans, squash or zucchini, sliced tomatoes or fried green tomatoes—to round out the meal. To

keep things easy, take along some boxed mixes to make corn or blueberry muffins, or buy frozen biscuits or yeast rolls. Come on, girls, you're on vacation, not competing in the Pillsbury Bake-Off!

We've gathered the best ideas from a variety of friends to present this smorgasbord of winning recipes, primarily casseroles, appetizers, and desserts. Pick and choose the ones that make the most sense to you. Our girlfriends suggest that you divide the cooking responsibilities among the families who will be vacationing, with each family taking a night to cook. This means you'll always have a variety of styles of cooking, and no one person will have to do all the work.

Here are some suggestions for recipes that travel well and hold up well for several days:

Cream Cheese Pound Cake, page 71

Any of the cookies, pages 87–101

Lemon Blossoms, page 110

Symphony Brownies, page 42

Good Seasons Salsa, page 41

Pimiento Cheese, page 40

And if that's not enough, here's more!

ALL-PURPOSE CHEESE SPREAD

Good cook Patty Ronning (see "Comfort Food," page 65) made this recipe famous at her children's weekend riverhouse get-togethers. Serve it with crackers or celery sticks, crusty French bread, or smear it on baked potatoes on steak night. Yum!

One 6-ounce roll Kraft
cheese food with garlic,
or any garlic-Cheddar
spread

One 8-ounce package cream
cheese, softened

½ cup mayonnaise

½ cup (1 stick) butter,
softened

Place all of the ingredients in a small mixing bowl. Mix well with a handheld electric mixer for about 3 minutes, scraping down the sides of the bowl, until completely combined. Store in a plastic container with a snap-on lid in the refrigerator. Serve at room temperature.

Makes 2 cups

BLT APPETIZER

This recipe came from Phyllis Curlee, of Savannah, who served it during visits with her brother and sister-in-law at Lake Oconee. It's messy but good!

Mix any leftovers together and serve as a salad with peeled, cooked shrimp and Cheddar cheese cubes, or fried chicken strips, chopped.

1 cup mayonnaise
1 cup sour cream
1 pound lean bacon, cooked
crisp and crumbled
Iceberg lettuce, shredded
2 large vine-ripe tomatoes,
chopped
Sea salt bagel chips

1. Combine the mayonnaise, sour cream, and half of the bacon in a small bowl with a snap-on lid. When well mixed, refrigerate until serving time.

2. When ready to serve, place the lettuce in a large serving bowl. Place the mayonnaise mixture on top of the lettuce. Top with the tomatoes and the remaining bacon. Serve with bagel chips.

Serves 8

SHRIMP AND SCALLOP LASAGNA

Martha Nesbit created this recipe for a column she writes for Savannah magazine. It's just delicious with pole beans, fresh sliced tomatoes, and blueberry muffins. For dessert, serve Mom's Banana Dessert (page 79), or my Buttermilk Pound Cake with Strawberries and Whipped Cream (page 12).

- 12 lasagna noodles
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2½ cups half-and-half
- 1 cup grated Romano cheese, preferably freshly grated
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ¾ pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- ¾ pound sea scallops, cut in half or quartered if very large
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese (freshly grated adds the most flavor)

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F if cooking immediately. (Do not preheat the oven if you are preparing the casserole to take on a family vacation.) Spray a 13-by-10-inch aluminum foil pan with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook the lasagna noodles until they are just done, about 8 minutes. Drain and set aside.

3. Melt the butter in a large, heavy skillet and cook the onion over low heat until very soft, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook about 1 minute more. Over medium-low heat, stir in the flour with a whisk, then gradually add the half-and-half, allowing the sauce to thicken slightly before adding more. When the sauce has thickened to about the consistency of whipping cream, add the Romano cheese and stir well. Add the salt and pepper and stir again. Add the shrimp and scallops and cook for about 5 minutes, just until the shrimp turn pink. Turn off the heat.

4. Spoon about 2 tablespoons of sauce from the skillet into the prepared pan. Cover the bottom of the pan with 4 noodles, placing them side by side. Spoon one-third of the sauce over the noodles, distributing half of the seafood evenly. Layer 4 more noodles, one-third of the sauce with half the seafood, the remaining 4 noodles, and the remaining sauce. For the top layer, do not spoon any seafood on top of the noodles; just use the sauce. Tuck in any edges of the noodles so they're all coated with sauce. Top with the Parmesan cheese.

5. The pan can be carefully wrapped for freezing and frozen at this point. Allow to thaw completely in

the refrigerator before baking. When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 375°F. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, uncovered, until bubbly. Allow to sit for 10 minutes before slicing.

Serves 8

PATTY'S SHRIMP CREOLE

This is another one of Patty Ronning's good ol' standbys. A friend told me recently that the kids in her family don't like shrimp creole, so on shrimp creole night, the kids always get sloppy joes. Well, the kids had been bragging about their aunt's famous sloppy joes for years, and asked their mom to get the recipe. Our friend asked her sister for the recipe, and it turns out it was Manwich out of the can! See? Everything tastes better when you're on vacation!

3 tablespoons vegetable oil
½ cup chopped onion
½ cup chopped celery
1 clove garlic, minced
One 14½-ounce can stewed tomatoes
One 8-ounce can tomato sauce
¾ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon sugar
½ to 1 teaspoon chili powder
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
Dash of hot sauce
2 teaspoons cornstarch
¾ pound small shrimp, peeled and deveined
½ cup chopped green bell pepper
Cooked rice

1. Heat the oil in a large, heavy skillet and cook the onion, celery, and garlic over low heat until tender, about 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes, tomato sauce, salt, sugar, chili powder, Worcestershire sauce, and hot sauce. Simmer, uncovered, for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally to keep the mixture from sticking.

2. Mix the cornstarch with 1 tablespoon cold water. Stir the cornstarch into the tomato mixture and cook for about 2 minutes. If you are going to serve this immediately, add the shrimp and green pepper and cook for about 8 to 10 minutes, until the shrimp are done. The shrimp should turn pink. Taste one to see if it is done to your liking. If you are preparing this to take on vacation, allow the tomato mixture to cool, then pack into a freezer bag and freeze until ready to use. When ready to prepare, thaw, place the mixture into a heavy saucepan or skillet, and bring to a simmer. Add the shrimp and green pepper and cook for 8 to 10 minutes. Serve over rice.

Serves 6

CUBAN SANDWICHES

Let's think about lunches for a second. I highly recommend the Smoked Turkey Wraps on page 39 or these Cuban sandwiches, which are different and tasty. The recipe came from Maria Oxnard, of Savannah, who served them along with jalapeño-spiked potato salad on a sunset cruise on the Intracoastal Waterway.

1 loaf French bread
Mayonnaise
Dijon mustard
½ pound thinly sliced ham,
your favorite brand
4 slices Swiss cheese
Sliced kosher dill pickles
Butter

1. Slice the bread in half lengthwise. Spread one half with mayonnaise and the other with mustard. Layer the ham and Swiss cheese on one half of the bread. Layer pickle slices over the cheese. Top with the other bread half.

2. In a large skillet or on a flat-bottomed griddle over medium-high heat, heat enough butter to coat the cooking surface. (You may need to cut the loaf in half so it fits in the pan.) Place the sandwich in the pan and press down with another heavy pan or a brick wrapped in foil and grill until the cheese is melted. Cut the loaf to make 4 sandwiches.

Serves 4

TOMATO PIE

Everybody fell in love with the tomato pie I made on my cooking show. Well, the following recipe is just a little different from mine. Either recipe you decide to make is sure to be a big hit. This particular recipe was created by caterer Sarah Gaede, who moved from Savannah to become an Episcopal priest. The smell while this is baking is just terrific! Serve it for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

One 9-inch refrigerated
piecrust, fitted into a
9-inch glass pie plate
 $\frac{3}{4}$ pound grated Monterey
Jack cheese
2 ripe tomatoes, halved
lengthwise and cut into
thin wedges
1 teaspoon dried basil
1 teaspoon dried oregano
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon pepper
2 green onions, thinly sliced,
white and green parts
2 tablespoons fresh bread
crumbs
2 tablespoons butter, melted

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F.
2. Crimp the edges of the piecrust and prick all over with a fork. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until just set and lightly browned. Let cool on a wire rack.
3. Sprinkle the cheese evenly over the crust. Top with overlapping tomato wedges in a circular pattern around the edge of the pie. Sprinkle the basil, oregano, salt, and pepper evenly over the tomatoes. Place the green onions in the center. Sprinkle with the bread crumbs and drizzle the butter over the pie. Bake for 20 minutes. Allow to sit at least 10 minutes before cutting into wedges.

Serves 8 as an appetizer or 4 as a main course

TACO SALAD

Martha's sister-in-law, Linda Giddens, made this famous. It's always a hit, particularly when you can get good tomatoes. The Giddens family has been serving this recipe for thirty years, long before Tex-Mex was the rage. The prepared ingredients can be stored separately in plastic bags in the refrigerator until you're ready to assemble the salad.

2 ripe tomatoes, diced
½ pound diced sharp
Cheddar cheese
1 large onion, chopped
1 head iceberg lettuce,
washed, drained, and
chopped
1 pound lean ground beef,
browned, crumbled, and
drained
One 16-ounce bottle
Catalina salad dressing
One 7-ounce bag taco-
flavored corn chips,
crushed
One 8-ounce bottle hot or
mild taco sauce

Combine the tomatoes, cheese, onion, lettuce, and ground beef in a large bowl. Add the entire bottle of salad dressing and mix well. Just before serving, add the taco chips, tossing to combine with the other ingredients. Top each serving with taco sauce. Serve with garlic bread.

Serves 6 to 8

ALICE JO'S SPAGHETTI SAUCE

Alice Jo Giddens, Martha Nesbit's mother, has served this sauce to hundreds of people who attend the Park Avenue United Methodist Church, in Valdosta. It's also eagerly anticipated at family get-togethers. Make it in advance and freeze it in pint- or quart-size containers.

1½ pounds ground beef
1 large onion, chopped
1 green bell pepper,
 chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped
Two 6-ounce cans tomato
 paste
One 8-ounce can tomato
 sauce
One 14½-ounce can stewed
 tomatoes
1 tablespoon Italian
 seasoning
1 tablespoon Worcestershire
 sauce
2 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon salt

Brown the beef in a large, heavy-bottomed pot, then drain off the fat. Add the onion, green pepper, and garlic, and sauté until the onion is tender, about 5 minutes. Add the tomato paste, tomato sauce, stewed tomatoes, 1 cup water, and seasonings. Simmer for 30 minutes. Let cool. The sauce will keep for several days, covered, in the refrigerator.

Serves 6 to 8

PUMPKIN BARS

These are so moist and delicious! Because canned pumpkin is sometimes considered "seasonal" by grocery stores, it may be hard to come by. When it's available, stock up so you can always make these in a hurry. This recipe is from Patty Ronning's files.

4 eggs
1 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups granulated sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
One 15-ounce can pumpkin
2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda

ICING:

One 3-ounce package cream cheese, softened
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 stick) butter or margarine, softened
2 cups sifted confectioners' sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Using an electric mixer at medium speed, combine the eggs, sugar, oil, and pumpkin until light and fluffy. Stir together the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, salt, and baking soda. Add the dry ingredients to the pumpkin mixture and mix at low speed until thoroughly combined and the batter is smooth.
3. Spread the batter in an ungreased nonstick 13-by-10-inch baking pan. Bake for 30 minutes. Let cool completely before frosting.
4. To make the icing: Combine the cream cheese and butter in a medium bowl with an electric mixer until smooth. Add the sugar and mix at low speed until combined. Stir in the vanilla and mix again. Spread on cooled pumpkin bars.

Makes 48 small bars or 24 larger ones

A Family Shabbat Dinner

THE MENU

CHOPPED LIVER

MAMA'S BRISKET

SWEET NOODLE KUGEL

ASPARAGUS WITH SHALLOT VINAIGRETTE

SQUASH CASSEROLE

SANDEE'S CHALLAH

APPLE STRUDEL

Being invited to a bar or bat mitzvah is a very special honor. When we originally thought of adding a bar or bat mitzvah menu to this book, we spoke with several Jewish friends, all of whom responded, "We had our party catered!"

However, when we asked good cooks Robbie Hollander, a schoolteacher, and her husband, Sandy, a restaurateur whose establishments include The Pirates' House, 45 South, and 45 South Bistro, Robbie had this response: "When asked to plan a menu for a bar or bat mitzvah, my thoughts immediately focused on the traditional Shabbat, or Friday night, dinner. Typically, the large events of this festive weekend are catered. However, we were fortunate to have friends who hosted Shabbat dinners for our son and daughter. This dinner is often held in someone's home for family and guests from out of town. It is an intimate way to greet one another and to welcome the Sabbath together, enjoying a home-cooked meal served on the 'company stuff,' as our children referred to our fine china."

These are the Hollanders' friends' treasured recipes. When Robbie makes the Friday night dinner, she prepares the main meal herself. "However, I do cheat on dessert," she admits, and asks chef Walter Dasher and his wife, Alice, to make the dessert. Walter and Alice provided the apple strudel recipe.

CHOPPED LIVER

Jane Feiler used this recipe for The Hard Lox Café, an annual fund-raiser for Temple Mickve Israel.

3 tablespoons butter
1 pound chicken livers,
cleaned
1 medium onion, chopped
½ teaspoon ground dried
thyme
Salt and pepper
3 hard-boiled eggs, roughly
chopped

1. Melt the butter in a skillet and cook the livers and onion until the onion becomes translucent, about 4 minutes. Add the thyme and generous amounts of salt and pepper while cooking. Drain the mixture but reserve any liquid.

2. Pulse the livers and onion four or five times in a food processor. Add the eggs and pulse again four or five times. Add some of the cooking liquid if needed; you want a smooth spreading consistency but not a paste. Serve with party rye or crackers.

Serves 10 to 12

MAMA'S BRISKET

This recipe, developed by Inez Pachter, also works as the main course for a casual party, minus the white potatoes and baby carrots. Serve the chopped brisket in buns.

- 1 beef brisket (4 to 5 pounds)
- 2 large onions, sliced

SAUCE:

- 1 cup ketchup
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ cup Worcestershire sauce
- 3 dashes of Tabasco
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar

- Four 14½-ounce cans whole white potatoes, drained
- One 1-pound bag baby carrots

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Place the brisket, fat side up, in a roasting pan. Brown in the oven, uncovered, for 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and lay the onions over the meat.
3. Bring all of the ingredients for the sauce to a boil in a small saucepan. Pour the hot sauce over the meat.
4. Reduce the oven temperature to 325°F and cook the brisket for 1½ hours, basting often. Remove from the oven and let cool. Cover with aluminum foil and refrigerate overnight.
5. When ready to serve, preheat the oven to 300°F. Remove any fat that has congealed. Slice the meat and return to the pan. Add the carrots and potatoes. Bake, covered, until the meat is very tender, about 1½ hours.

Serves 10 to 12

SWEET NOODLE KUGEL

Everybody's favorite! Robbie Hollander created this recipe with a little of this and a little of that from several recipes that she liked.

- 1 pound wide egg noodles,
cooked and drained
- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter,
melted
- 1 pound cottage cheese
- 2 cups regular or reduced-
fat (2% or 4%) sour
cream
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 6 eggs, beaten
- ½ cup raisins (optional)
- 1 8-ounce can crushed
pineapple, drained
(optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 13-by-9-inch baking dish.

2. Combine the warm noodles and butter in a large glass bowl. Add the cottage cheese, sour cream, cinnamon, sugar, and vanilla and stir gently. Add the eggs and mix gently but thoroughly. Add the raisins and pineapple, if using. Pour into the prepared baking dish and bake for 1 hour.

Serves 12

ASPARAGUS WITH SHALLOT VINAIGRETTE

Gail Levites contributed this one. The dressing is enough for about three dozen asparagus spears.

2 tablespoons red wine
vinegar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons finely
chopped shallots
Salt and pepper
4 to 6 asparagus spears per
person, steamed until
tender

Whisk the vinegar and mustard together in a small glass bowl. Slowly drizzle in the oil, whisking constantly. Add the shallots, and salt and pepper to taste, and mix well. Allow to sit at room temperature for 30 minutes. Drizzle over the hot asparagus. Serve at room temperature.

SQUASH CASSEROLE

Robbie says a squash casserole is a requirement at a Shabbat dinner. This is her children's favorite.

1½ pounds yellow squash,
about 6 medium,
ends trimmed, lightly
peeled and sliced
¼ cup chopped onion
1 egg, beaten
¼ cup (½ stick) butter
1½ teaspoons sugar
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
¼ cup soft bread crumbs

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Grease a 2-quart casserole dish.

2. Boil the squash until tender, then drain and mash. Add the onion, egg, 2 tablespoons of the butter, the sugar, salt, and pepper. Place the squash mixture into the prepared casserole dish and smooth the top. Melt the remaining 2 tablespoons butter and pour over the top. Sprinkle with the bread crumbs. Bake for 30 minutes, or until brown.

Serves 6 to 8

SANDEE'S CHALLAH

Challah is the braided egg bread eaten on the Sabbath and many holidays. This recipe comes from Sandee Eichholz.

1 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup sugar
3 3/4 cups flour (half bread
flour and half all-purpose
flour)
1 envelope active dry yeast
2 eggs, beaten, plus 1 egg
for glaze
1/4 cup vegetable oil, plus
more for greasing bowl

Sesame or poppy seeds
Butter for glazing

1. In a food processor, pulse the salt, sugar, and flour to combine.

2. Soak the yeast for 10 minutes in 1 cup water that is warm to the wrist but not hot enough to kill the yeast (between 105° and 115°F). Add the yeast to the food processor, then add the eggs and oil. Process until the mixture forms a ball on the steel processor blade. (If the weather is humid, you may have to add more flour, 1 tablespoon at a time.) Place the dough in an oiled bowl and turn to coat all sides. Cover with a towel and let rise in a warm place for about 1 1/2 hours, or until doubled in size.

3. Divide the dough into 3 pieces. Roll each into a long skinny log. Braid the dough, tucking in the ends. Place the braided dough on a cookie sheet and let rise, covered, for 1 hour.

4. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

5. Brush the risen loaf with beaten egg and sprinkle with sesame or poppy seeds. Bake for 30 minutes, or until golden. While the bread is hot, rub with a stick of butter to glaze it.

Serves 10 to 12

APPLE STRUDEL

Chef Walter Dasher and his wife, Alice, are known for their fabulous desserts. This is one of them.

¼ cup bourbon or apple juice
½ cup golden raisins
2 to 3 Granny Smith apples (about 1 pound), peeled, cored, halved, and thinly sliced
Juice of ½ lemon
1 tablespoon lemon zest, finely chopped
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, plus more for sprinkling
½ cup packed light brown sugar
¼ cup crushed shortbread cookies
¼ cup chopped pecans
2 tablespoons butter, cut into pieces
6 sheets phyllo dough from a 1-pound package of frozen dough
2 tablespoons butter, melted, for brushing phyllo sheets; more if needed
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
Confectioners' sugar
Purchased caramel sauce

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. Pour the bourbon or apple juice over the raisins in a small bowl and microwave on high for 25 seconds to plump the raisins. Let sit for 15 minutes.

3. Combine the raisins, apples, lemon juice, lemon zest, cinnamon, brown sugar, cookie crumbs, pecans, and butter in a large bowl.

4. Remove the phyllo dough from the box, unfold, and cover with a damp tea towel. Place 1 sheet of phyllo on the work surface and brush lightly with melted butter. Repeat with the remaining sheets, brushing each with melted butter, stacking when done, being sure to keep the unbuttered phyllo covered.

5. Place the apple mixture on the nearest third of the phyllo stack, being sure to leave a 2-inch border. Gently lift the bottom edge of the phyllo stack to cover the filling and fold the side edges over. Continue to roll the stack away from you until the filling is completely sealed in and the seam is on the bottom. Transfer to the prepared baking sheet. Brush the top with melted butter and sprinkle with the granulated sugar.

5. Bake for 30 minutes, until golden brown. Sprinkle with cinnamon and confectioners' sugar. Pass warm caramel sauce, to drizzle over the strudel.

Serves 8

An Ice Cream Social

THE MENU

BANANA SHERBET

PEACH ICE CREAM

BUTTER PECAN ICE CREAM

LEMON ICE CREAM

BUTTERMILK ICE CREAM

FRESH STRAWBERRY SORBET

VANILLA BEAN CUSTARD ICE CREAM

Each June, the parishioners at the Isle of Hope United Methodist Church, in Savannah, welcome the new ministers, whether they are really new or just returning for another year, with an ice cream social. Tables are set up in the social hall and folks are invited to bring in their best homemade ice cream.

Talented parishioners like Matra Jordon are responsible for decorating, which is always casual, sometimes with a red-white-and-blue all-American theme. "Sometimes, I'll just use summer flowers and surround them with items that represent the interests of the ministers, like when I did tennis rackets, balls, and hats for one of our preacher's wives who taught tennis."

The children all head for the sundae table, where they load up on store-bought ice cream, chocolate syrup, and sprinkles. But older and wiser folks make a beeline for their favorite homemade cream in flavors like lemon, banana, peach, butter pecan, and buttermilk.

In testing these recipes, we decided to take the easy way out and use one of the tabletop ice cream makers—the kind with the bowl you keep in the freezer. Boy, do those machines make homemade ice cream easy! Most of these machines make 1½ quarts of ice cream, so if you decide to use the old electric or hand-cranked kind, triple these recipes. If the ingredients came straight from the fridge, there is no need to chill the mixture before churning. When you make the vanilla custard ice cream, however, you need to chill the mixture overnight. All of the ice creams we tested had a soft-serve texture right after churning and a more solid consistency after freezing.

BANANA SHERBET

This recipe from Glenna Harlan, of Savannah, has been in the Harlan family for more than fifty years. The recipe uses only ½ cup of condensed milk, so I guess you'll just have to make another batch to use up the rest of the can!

- ¾ cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons frozen orange juice concentrate
- 2 tablespoons frozen lemonade concentrate
- ½ cup sweetened condensed milk
- 2 ripe bananas, mashed
- 3 cups whole milk

In an 8-cup glass measuring cup with a spout, combine all of the ingredients. Whisk until the sugar is dissolved. Pour the mixture into an ice cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions. Serve immediately or store in the freezer in a plastic container with a snap-on lid.

Makes about ten ½-cup servings

PEACH ICE CREAM

Peggy Grimsley, of Macon, Georgia, got this recipe from her mother. It tastes like frozen peaches and cream.

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 pound ripe peaches, peeled and mashed with a fork or potato masher
- 1¼ cups half-and-half
- 1¼ cups whipping cream
- 1¼ cups whole milk
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Sprinkle ¼ cup of the sugar over the peaches and set aside.

2. Bring the remaining ¾ cup sugar, the half-and-half, cream, milk, and salt to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Let cool until the mixture reaches room temperature, then add the almond and vanilla extracts. Pour the mixture into an ice cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions, adding the peaches during the final 10 minutes of freezing. Serve immediately or store in the freezer in a plastic container with a snap-on lid.

Makes about ten ½-cup servings

BUTTER PECAN ICE CREAM

This recipe was made famous by Libby Lindsey, of the Isle of Hope, in Savannah. The buttery pecans are just delicious!

1 tablespoon unsalted butter
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup chopped pecans
One 13-ounce can
evaporated milk
One $3\frac{3}{4}$ -ounce package
instant French vanilla
pudding mix
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 cups whole milk

1. Melt the butter in a small saucepan. Cook the pecans over low heat until they are browned, about 3 minutes. Place on paper towels to drain and cool.

2. In an 8-cup glass measuring cup with a spout, combine the remaining ingredients. Whisk until the sugar is dissolved. Pour the mixture into an ice cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions, adding the pecans during the final 10 minutes of freezing. Serve immediately or store in the freezer in a plastic container with a snap-on lid.

Makes about ten $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings

LEMON ICE CREAM

Karen Pannell, of Savannah, wows all her guests with this one.

$1\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar
Juice of 3 lemons
1 tablespoon grated lemon
zest
4 cups half-and-half

1. In an 8-cup glass measuring cup with spout, combine all of the ingredients. Whisk until the sugar is dissolved. Pour the mixture into an ice cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions. Serve immediately or store in the freezer in a plastic container with a snap-on lid.

Makes about ten $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings

BUTTERMILK ICE CREAM

I know what you're thinking: This can't be good! But it is! Sally Scott brought this tangy surprise to an ice cream social several years back. She got the recipe from Kimi Hoffman, who contributed it to the church cookbook published in 1996. It's so easy and so good!

2½ cups buttermilk
1½ cups whipping cream
1⅓ cups sugar
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

In an 8-cup glass measuring cup with a spout, combine all of the ingredients. Whisk until the sugar is dissolved. Pour the mixture into an ice cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions. Serve immediately or store in the freezer in a plastic container with a snap-on lid.

Makes about ten ½-cup servings

FRESH STRAWBERRY SORBET

Why include a recipe for sorbet in an ice cream social menu? Because some people can't tolerate milk products, bless their hearts. This is a great little recipe to have on hand at all times. Kids love it, but it also makes a good palate cleanser during a fancy dinner party.

2 cups sugar
4 pints strawberries, hulled
and sliced
¼ cup fresh lime juice
½ cup light corn syrup

1. Bring the sugar and 2 cups water to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat and allow the mixture to simmer, without stirring, until the sugar dissolves, about 3 minutes. Set aside to cool completely.

2. Place the strawberries and lime juice in a food processor and puree. Press the strawberry puree through a strainer to remove the seeds. When the sugar syrup has cooled completely, combine with the strawberry puree. Add the corn syrup and stir well.

3. Pour the mixture into an ice cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions. Sorbet is particularly soft after churning but firms up after freezing.

Makes about six ½-cup servings

VANILLA BEAN CUSTARD ICE CREAM

David Slagel ("The Boss Comes to Dinner," page 53) created this recipe for a Fourth of July potluck picnic. David and his wife, Katherine, were honored to have been asked to the home of Gary and Deanne Butch, along with the staff and families of Savannah's famed Elizabeth's on 37th restaurant. Gary and his brother, Greg, prepared delicious tuna steaks, and the rest of the guests were in charge of the sides. Needless to say, the cooking was competitive! David and others churned many quarts of ice cream, and his received the highest accolades. Michael and Elizabeth Terry proclaimed that his was the best ice cream they had ever tasted. "David has never quite recovered from this compliment," says Katherine. "Believe me, it is worth the effort!" We adapted David's proportions to use in our countertop machine.

1½ cups whole milk
1½ cups whipping cream
1 vanilla bean, split in half
lengthwise
3 egg yolks
⅞ cup sugar
Pinch of salt

1. Combine the milk and cream in the top of a double boiler. Scrape the soft seeds from the vanilla bean and add half the seeds and half the pod to the milk mixture. Heat the mixture over simmering water until it is hot and steaming, stirring constantly to prevent scorching, for 15 minutes. Let cool, covered, for 15 minutes.

2. Beat the egg yolks, sugar, and salt with an electric mixer until fluffy and a light yellow color, about 3 minutes.

3. Strain the cooled milk mixture into the egg mixture and mix at low speed until combined, about 2 minutes. Return the mixture to the double boiler and cook over medium-low heat for 10 to 15 minutes, until thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Strain into a container with a tight-fitting lid. Cool overnight in the refrigerator, or cool the mixture in an ice bath.

4. Pour the cooled mixture into an ice cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions.

Makes about eight ½-cup servings

Just Drinks

THE MENU

SWEET TEA

LEMONADE

PLANTATION ICED TEA

FRUIT PUNCH

MARGARITAS

FUZZY NAVEL

STRAWBERRY SLUSH

IRISH JASPER GREEN

HOT CRANBERRY CIDER

APPLE MARTINI

The truth is, I'm not big on alcohol, and neither is my friend Martha. But we know a good punch when we taste it! And we also have friends who supplied us with their favorite alcoholic drinks.

Two great recipes are found in other chapters: Herb's Bloody Marys are in "A Georgia Bulldawg Parking Lot Tailgate" on page 43, and Gilbert's Mint Juleps are in "Run for the Roses" on page 161. My new cookbook would not be complete without a recipe for The Lady & Sons Sweet Tea, my favorite beverage, or lemonade, which comes in a close second. I've also rounded up a few more favorites. Having a special beverage is important for the success of any party, or of any special meal, for that matter.

SWEET TEA

The hotter the weather gets, the sweeter we want our tea! I like mine with fresh mint.

7 tea bags
1 cup sugar
Mint sprigs
Lemon wedges

Bring 4 cups water to a boil in a kettle. Add the tea bags and turn off the heat immediately. Place the lid on the kettle and allow the tea to steep for 1 hour. Remove the tea bags and pour the tea into a pitcher. Add the sugar and stir to dissolve. Add 4 cups cold water. Serve over ice with a sprig of mint and a lemon wedge.

Makes 2 quarts, about 10 servings

LEMONADE

Our lemonade at the restaurant is so popular, we have to make it in tremendous batches, which is hard to break down for home use. We don't make ours from a mix—it's made from scratch.

3 cups sugar
2 cups fresh lemon juice
1 lemon, sliced
Mint sprigs, for garnish

Put the sugar and 1 cup hot water in a 1-gallon container and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Add the lemon juice. Fill the container with cold water. Stir until well mixed. Serve over ice, with a squeezed lemon slice on top and garnished with mint.

Makes 1 gallon, about 20 servings

PLANTATION ICED TEA

Patty Ronning, of Savannah, serves this at luncheons where no alcohol is permitted.

7 tea bags
12 mint leaves
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
One 6-ounce can frozen
lemonade concentrate
One 12-ounce can pineapple
juice

Pour 4 cups boiling water over the tea bags, mint, and sugar in a pitcher. Steep for 30 minutes. Remove the tea bags, squeezing out excess liquid. Remove the mint. Prepare the lemonade according to the instructions and add to the tea. Add the pineapple juice and stir. Serve over ice.

Makes 2 quarts, about 10 servings

FRUIT PUNCH

Keep this in milk jugs for easier pouring.

Two 6-ounce cans frozen
orange juice concentrate
Two 6-ounce cans frozen
lemonade concentrate
One 48-ounce can
pineapple juice
3 cups sugar
2 pints strawberries, hulled
One 2-liter bottle of Sprite

1. Combine the orange juice, lemonade, and pineapple juice and stir well.

2. Bring 3 cups water and the sugar to a boil in a heavy saucepan and boil until the sugar is dissolved, about 5 minutes. Let cool. Add the syrup to the fruit juices.

3. Place the whole strawberries into a ring mold that will float in your punch bowl. Pour in enough fruit juice to fill the mold. Freeze. Refrigerate the remaining juice.

4. When ready to serve, pour the fruit juice into a punch bowl and add the Sprite. Float the strawberry ice ring in the punch.

Makes 1 gallon, about 20 servings

MARGARITAS

When I'm having a social drink, this is the one for me.

One 6-ounce can frozen
limeade concentrate
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup gold tequila
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup triple sec (orange
liqueur)
Fresh lime slices
Salt

1. Place the limeade in a blender. Add the tequila (fill the empty limeade can) to the blender. Add the triple sec to the blender. Fill with ice and blend.

2. Take a lime slice and rub it around the rim of a glass. Dip the glass in salt. Fill with frozen margarita.

Makes 6 drinks

FUZZY NAVEL

This is delicious!

3 medium peaches, peeled
and cut from pit
One 6-ounce can frozen
orange juice concentrate
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup rum, light or dark
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
Mint sprigs for garnish

Place the peaches, orange juice, rum, sugar, and 1 cup crushed ice in a blender. Blend until smooth. Serve garnished with fresh mint.

Makes 4 drinks

STRAWBERRY SLUSH

This was served by Molly Gignilliat, of Savannah, at a wedding shower.

One 3-ounce package
strawberry gelatin dessert
mix
1 cup pineapple juice
1 cup lemonade, made from
frozen concentrate
2 cups crushed fresh
strawberries
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar

Dissolve the gelatin in 1 cup boiling water. When completely dissolved, place in a blender with the remaining ingredients and 1 cup cold water. Blend. Add about 1 cup crushed ice or several ice cubes and blend again. Mixture will be thick.

Serves 4 to 6

IRISH JASPER GREEN

Serve this on St. Patrick's Day. Sgt. William Jasper fought and was mortally wounded in the Siege of Savannah. He became famous because he picked up a fallen flag and rallied the troops. The Irish Jasper Green Company of the National Guard is still in existence in Savannah today.

2 scoops lime sherbet
1 cup lemonade, made from
frozen concentrate
1 tablespoon honey
Splash of cream
Mint sprigs, for garnish

Place the sherbet, lemonade, honey, cream, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup crushed ice in a blender. Blend until smooth. Serve garnished with fresh mint.

Makes 2 drinks

HOT CRANBERRY CIDER

This smells so good when it's percolating. Once you've used your coffeepot to make it, however, it always has the smell of cloves and cinnamon sticks in it! We recommend you dedicate a cheap percolator to this recipe.

¼ cup packed brown sugar
3 cinnamon sticks, plus
additional sticks to use as
stirrers
1 tablespoon whole cloves
6 cups cranberry juice
8 cups apple juice

Put the sugar, cinnamon sticks, and cloves in the basket of a coffee percolator. Put the juices in the bottom of the percolator. Let the mixture perk as if making coffee. Serve with cinnamon stick stirrers if desired.

Makes 3½ quarts, about 18 servings

APPLE MARTINI

Don't ask me why, but martinis are all the rage in our bar at The Lady & Sons restaurant in Savannah. Our bartender, Shaky (her real name is Laura Schexnayder-Thomas), said this is how she makes them.

1½ ounces Absolut vodka
1¼ ounces Sour Apple
Pucker schnapps liqueur
Dash of Cointreau

Combine the vodka, liqueur, and Cointreau. Shake like crazy with ½ cup crushed ice until only slivers of ice are left. Strain into a martini glass.

Makes 1 drink